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NOTES ON THE PARABLES

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NOTES ON THE PARABLES

ACCORDING TO

LITERAL AND FUTURIST PRINCIPLES
OF INTERPRETATION

BY

MRS MACLACHLAN
(OF MACLACHLAN)



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P R E F A C E.

It is hoped this volume will strengthen the chain of evidence in favour of literal and futurist principles of interpretation, which it has been the object of the author in former works to recommend.

According to these principles, we find the kingdom of the blessed man Christ Jesus will be a material kingdom, although glorious, heavenly, and spiritual.

As redemption was not accomplished by a purely spiritual Saviour, it would be impossible to reward the Redeemer with a purely spiritual kingdom, and it would be equally impossible to locate the spiritualised material resurrection bodies of His saints in a purely spiritual and immaterial heaven. At His second advent, the great God our Saviour will be manifested in a glorified body so truly material, composed of "flesh and bones," that He and His risen saints will require a literal and material place (New Jerusalem) to dwell in, and a glorified and material kingdom to reign over.

That kingdom will consist of two spheres, closely united, heavenly for the Church, and this world regenerated for the redeemed of the earthly calling—namely, Israel and all saved Gentile nations.

He who was born "King of the Jews" and died

"King of the Jews," has yet to reign in eternal and visible glory as "King of the Jews" and "King of Israel" over His chosen nation, to be saved in "the last days" with "an everlasting salvation, world without end."

In 'The Hope of Israel' it is observed, "That almost all our Lord's parables, in their primary and unaccommodated signification, refer to the coming of His kingdom—a consideration which, when it is admitted, furnishes a key to the solution of many of the difficulties by which they are generally supposed to be encompassed."

Jesus came not to destroy, but to fulfil. He came to confirm the promises made unto the fathers, to seal the covenants with His blood. They are ratified by the work of Christ in suffering; but their perfect accomplishment remains for the period of glory, of which His discourses and parables, and the incidents of His life, so frequently speak.

The subject-matter of the Lord's public teaching to the Jews is described in these terms: "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled; and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." And His own testimony is to the same effect—"I must preach the kingdom of God, . . . for therefore am I sent." Even a cursory reading of the parabolic teaching of Jesus will show "the kingdom of heaven" or "the kingdom of God" (for the two are equivalent) to be the topic of almost all His discourses.

It was predicted in the seventy-eighth Psalm that Israel's Messiah would open His mouth in parables, and utter dark sayings of old. This He did, lest all

the Jews who heard Him should believe and be converted, His purpose at His first advent being to gather an election from among the people, and not to remove the judicial blindness of the Jewish nation, till in mercy He has added to His Church, for a long course of years, a people for His name from among the Gentiles; and "dark sayings" the parables have certainly been, since their real and primary meanings are only now being brought to light.

To help to do this is so much the object of these Notes, that we purposely refrain from attempting to point out the practical use that should be made of the parables by the Gentiles. This has been often done already; but we venture to hope, that such inferences will be more correct when the Jewish stand-point of the Messiah's teaching is clearly ascertained.

Neither John the Baptist nor the Lord introduced "the gospel of the grace of God" "without the deeds of the law." It was given to Paul for the Gentiles fifteen years after Pentecost, when the Jews rejected and delayed the manifestation of the Redeemer's kingdom, by contradicting and blaspheming the Holy Ghost.

But no opposition of His gainsaying and disobedient chosen nation, can change or defeat the purposes of our unchangeable God; who has from all eternity determined to glorify Himself in the everlasting kingdom of His Son: which in due time will appear to His honour and glory, and the salvation of all creation.

Theology has been so concentrated for ages upon the Church, and the Church only, that the redemption of the world, and its restoration to much more

than pristine goodness and glory at the restitution and regeneration of all things, has been quite forgotten till of recent years; and even yet it is the few, in comparison of the many, who look for the Lord from heaven, not only to judge the world, but to redeem it out of the hands of all His enemies; and to establish His own universal and everlasting reign in power and visible glory over all saved and converted nations, so that of His kingdom, predicted in the parables, Psalms, and prophets, "there shall be no end."

It was thought expedient to commence these Notes with a parable not doctrinal, as in Matt. ix., but historical and prophetical, because there are very many persons not at all conversant with the Jews' future. This is the natural consequence of spiritualising the prophecies, as it is called, and of the long prevailing conventional way of reading the Scriptures, which blinds people to their real meaning.

In a former volume we maintained the darkness of Old Testament times, from the revelations of God having been progressively given; the non-abrogation of Mosaic law to the Jewish nation, either by the Messiah or His apostles; the silence of Scripture during the eighteen hundred years the Jews are wandering among the Gentiles; and the great difference between "the gospel of the kingdom" for the Jews, and "the gospel of the grace of God" for the Gentiles, which entails great difference of doctrine between the gospels and the epistles. We believe this book will confirm all these important points.

H. M'L.

BOURNEMOUTH, *April* 1873.

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NOTES ON THE PARABLES.

THE UNCLEAN SPIRIT.

MATT. XII. 43-45.

43. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.

44. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished.

45. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

COMPARE WITH MARK, III. 22-27, AND LUKE, XI. 17-26.

THIS parable in Matthew and Luke stands in close connection with the Messiah's assertion that, by His casting out demons, the Jews might be sure that "the kingdom of God" had come unto them. The words "kingdom" and "king" are sometimes used in Scripture as convertible terms. This teaches us, that if the Jewish nation believed on the king then "among" them, the kingdom, nigh at hand, would immediately appear; but they believed not, so its manifestation is delayed.

Dan. vii.
17, 23.

Luke, xvii.
21.

In this parable the final entire destruction of Satan's power is prophesied.

It was spoken by the Messiah to certain of the Scribes and Pharisees, whom He who knew all things was aware would eventually become His open and

Ver. 38.

John, xvi.
30.

declared enemies ; who were so evil that He called them "an evil and adulterous generation ; serpents, vipers," and "the children of the devil," the old serpent.

Ver. 34.
Matt. liii. 7;
xxiii. 33;
John. viii.
41-44.

These Pharisees hypocritically asking for a sign, Jesus says no sign shall be given them but the sign of the prophet Jonas, which represents His own death and resurrection. In the forty-first verse, He prefers the men of Nineveh, on account of their faith and repentance, to the nation of the Jews, who He predicts will not believe though one should rise from the dead, which He afterwards did.

Luke. xvi.
30, 31.

The unclean spirit is the devil, and his house is the house of Judah in the Jews' land.

Ver. 28, 29. "The stronger than the strong man" is the Lord Himself, who was showing the Jews that He, "by the spirit and finger of God," was able to cast out demons, thus attesting His divine mission, and giving proof that "the kingdom of God" was come unto them, if they believed in Him as the Messiah.

Luke. xi.
20.

Matt. xi.
14.

Jesus compares the nation to a man out of whom the unclean spirit had been cast : but Satan was not literally cast out until the end of the apostles' mission, when miraculous agency in Palestine ceased, and the Jews were driven out of the land, the house being thus made desolate.

Matt. xxiii.
38.

The forty-third verse describes the devil's houseless state, ill at ease, restrained in power, seeking rest and finding none, during the present parenthetical dispensation, whilst the Jews as a nation do not exist, and he is not permitted to have a similar lodgment, or to exercise the same power in any other nation as he formerly had in his house, the Jewish land and people.

The unclean spirit, returning to his house, "findeth

it empty, swept, and garnished," refers to the partial restoration of the Jews to their own land in "the time of the end," to which they will go in an unconverted state, unoccupied by faith in Christ and His spirit, therefore open to the return of the great enemy.

Dan. xii.
4, 9

The devil being then cast out of heaven for ever with his angels into the land of Israel, will, with the assistance of wicked spirits, retake possession of it with sevenfold energy, and cause the Jews to make a covenant with the Antichrist (possessed of Satan), which will bring upon them the terrible chastening of the great tribulation, whereby only one-third of the restored Jews will be left in the land when the Lord comes to destroy all his enemies.

Rev. xii.
9, 12.
1 Tim. iv.
1; Rev. ix.;
xvi. 13, 14.

That this is the meaning of the parable seems obvious from the concluding words of the forty-fifth verse, "Even so shall it be with this wicked generation" or nation.

Dan. ix.
27; Isa.
xxviii. 18.
Rev. xiii.
2; Dan.
viii. 24.
Ezek. xxii.
19-22;
Matt. xxiv.
21, 22.
Zech. xiii.
9.

We should remember that at the crucifixion of the Redeemer, the Jews committed the greatest of national sins; they crucified their King, and then imprecated upon themselves and their children the punishment of having shed His blood. The last state, therefore, of the Jewish nation will be seven times worse than the first.

Matt. xxvii.
25.

But, finally, when the stronger (the glorified Redeemer) than the strong man (the anti-Messiah possessed of Satan) comes again, He will bind the devil permanently, fulfilling thereby the promise of bruising the serpent's head, and will spoil his house for ever. Then shall the unclean spirit pass out of Israel's land, and "Jacob shall be ransomed from the hand of him that was stronger than he."

Rev. xix.
11.
Rev. xx.
1-3; Rom.
xvi. 20.
Gen. iii. 15.
Zech. xiii.
2.
Jer. xxxi.
11; Ps.
xviii. 17;
cxlii. 6.

In this parable we have an instance of the gap or

break in prophecy (between verses 43 and 44), which explains so many difficulties that it has been well said of it, "the parenthetical nature of this dispensation is the only solution to difficulties and stumbling-blocks to faith without end." We are also not without hope, it and its consequences will give proofs of the inspiration of Scripture that rationalists and sceptics will not be able to resist or refute.

Phil. ii. 15; Deut. xxxii. 5, 20, 28. The Jews are the perverse, froward, and unbelieving nation, "the generation of His wrath," to whom Jesus said, "Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." Jer. vii. 29; ii. 31. These Jewish people and those of "the last days" Matt. xxiv. 34. are consistently spoken of in Scripture as one generation, as if no space of time intervened, because the Bible only gives the history of God's chosen race. John, xvi. 16. The Lord, therefore, spake as to time in the same sense as Paul in Heb. x. 37, and many other texts.

They are "the generation of" (God's) "wrath," because as a nation they denied that their Messiah had come in the flesh. This constituted the antichristianism of the first days. They will deny both the Father and the Son in the last days. This, and not Popery, which prevails in this interim period, is the great "falling away" which is to precede and to be the finally procuring cause of the greatest tribulation ever known to any nation. It will be satanic in character; "terrible" in connection with Israel's end, as from their beginning hitherto.

2 Thess. ii. 3, 4. There are benefits to be derived from understanding this parable aright: ought not Christians to rejoice with thanksgiving when they find all Jehovah's anger, wrath, and jealousy, of which there are such awful proofs yet to come, belong to the Jews for national sin, and not to sin in general in the mem-

Phil. ii. 15;
Deut. xxxii.
5, 20, 28.
Jer. vii. 29;
ii. 31.
Matt. xxiv.
34.

John, xvi.
16.

2 John, 7;
1 John, ii.
18.

1 John, ii.
22.

2 Thess. ii.
3, 4.

Mark, xiii.
19, 20.
Dan. vii. 7;
Deut. xxxii.
29; Isa.
xviii. 2, 7.

bers of His elect Church, who are all beloved by the Father from eternity, and viewed by Him as complete and perfectly righteous in His Son?

Col. ii. 10;
1 John, iii.
7.

Have we not cause to be thankful to God that Satan's power is so restrained that legions of demons cannot fill our land with demoniacs, nor bind our bodies with disease for eighteen years, as he did the woman that was a daughter of Abraham?

Luke, xiii.
16.

And should not their faith be strengthened by learning the true cause why miracles have been so long discontinued; and rationalists be warned that they will surely be resumed when God deals again directly with His scattered nation? Should we not increase in humility when we see that miracles by no means took place to establish the Church, and ceased when no longer required for this purpose, which is the usual cause assigned for their occurrence?

It is said sometimes, "this parable is certainly for the Jews, and by all means let them have it; but all the other parables are for us, and predict the history of the Gentile Church."

Let us proceed, and see how far this is true.

THE SOWER.

MATT. XIII. 3-9.

3. And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow:

4. And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way-side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:

5. Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth;

and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:

6. And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away:

7. And some fell among thorns;

and the thorns sprung up and some an hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold.

8. But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, 9. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

COMPARE WITH MARK, IV. 3-9, AND LUKE, VIII. 5-8.

The theme with which the Messiah commenced His ministry was, "the kingdom of heaven."

The phrase, "kingdom of heaven," was not new, but evidently adopted from the prophet Daniel in his visions of the Messiah's kingdom.

The Lord proclaimed to the Jewish nation that the consummation of which they were so long advertised was now approaching. As earnest of this happy era, He accompanied His testimony with all kinds of redemptive acts: reminding by His word and works that "the kingdom," the object of Jewish hope, was brought nigh to the generation to which He came in merciful visitation.

He came to His own, but His own (the Jews as a nation) received Him not: therefore the nation was not gathered at the first advent, as it and the Gentiles will surely be at the second.

This parable was spoken to multitudes, but only understood by the disciples, to whom Jesus explained it in verses 18-23.

The Messiah was the sower: particular notice should be taken that no other sower of any other kind, place, or time, is at all alluded to.

He sowed seed nowhere but in Immanuel's land: indeed, so entirely was the Lord's ministry confined to the Jews, that when He sent His twelve disciples to different parts of that country to announce His coming, "He commanded them, saying, go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; . . . for verily I say unto

Matt. x.
5-7, 23.



you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come."

The seed was not "the gospel of the grace of God" Acts, xx. 24-
 "without the deeds of the law," afterwards revealed Rom. iii. 20, 28.
 to Paul for the Gentiles, but the good news of the kingdom promised to Israel, to be then bestowed on the Jews if they repented—nationally.

This good news was rejected by the Pharisees and Matt. xii. 14-
 rulers of the nation, but reached the hearts of publicans and sinners, who felt their need of the Great Physician, and of whom the Lord said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Matt. xv. 24-
 The word "lost" must here be understood in the sense of "wandering," for these sheep were wandering and astray from Jehovah's "holy, just, and good law," and had no righteousness of their own to offer for justification, like the legally self-righteous Pharisees, who would not go into the kingdom on the terms of the offered new covenant—viz., free forgiveness of sins. Rom. vii. 12.

The Redeemer's seed was good, but it fell into Hos. x. 1.
 "barren" ground, and little came to perfection. One Luke, xiii. 6-9.
 great cause of failure was the extraordinary power permitted to Satan, the wicked one, in those days. He had power to take the good news of the kingdom being speedily restored to Israel out of the hearts of those Jews who heard its coming proclaimed, and did not believe in Jesus as the Messiah, the king of that kingdom. The reason why such power was given was to afford opportunity to Jesus to attest the truth of His mission by being able to undo the works of the devil, whose power has ever been specially manifested in connection with the chosen people. It is to be regretted that this has not been more carefully observed. We believe much needless fear of Satan

in this dispensation has existed in many Christian minds, from this passage of Scripture regarding Jews only, and Jews alone of a particular generation ; for we are sure it is now impossible for Satan to take the word of life by the Spirit out of the hearts of the elect according to the Gospel of the grace of God, who can, by nothing in heaven above, nor in the earth beneath, be separated from the love of Christ :
 Rom. viii. 35-39.
 John, x. 28. and if the disciples could by no means be plucked out of the Messiah's hand, neither can a single member of His body, the Church, be taken by Satan from the Redeemer.

"The sun scorching" is explained by Mark to mean "persecution" arising for the Word's sake, which caused many of the Messiah's followers to fall away ; but some endured to the end of their lives, and brought forth good fruit ; some thirty-fold, John, xv. 5, some sixty, and some an hundred. The disciples of 16.
 Jesus were doubtless the most abundant producers of good fruit : Judas excepted, for he brought forth evil fruit : and the rich young man is a sample of Matt. xix. 21, 22.
 the Jews who brought forth no fruit at all.

The object of this parable was to show how small a proportion of the seed sown by the Messiah during His three and a half year's ministry in Palestine would bring forth good fruit. It was not His intention to convert the Jewish nation at that time.

The parable of the sower is of easy adaptation to Gentiles now, for human nature is at all times and at all places the same ; but the context plainly applies it to the Jews of that day, saying, Isa. vi. 10 ;
 Matt. xiii. 14, 15. "In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed lest they should be converted, and healed."

Have not Gentiles cause to rejoice that this parable does not predict there will be as little good fruit produced by "the Gospel of the grace of God" preached for more than eighteen hundred years among them?

The parable of the sower, it may also be observed, does not refer to heathen countries, where the Word has never been preached; nor does it account for the failure of fruit in heathen lands to which it has been sent.

No commission has ever been given to convert the whole world as it is known now, by the preaching of "the Gospel of the grace of God." The commission given by the rejected Messiah to His eleven Jewish disciples, was the Gospel (or good news) of the kingdom, which they were to herald to all the nations of the then known world, beginning at Jerusalem: a commission which was fully performed in their day.

Matt.
xxviii. 20.
Mark, xvi.
16, 17.

Luke, xxiv.
47.

THE TARES.

MATT. XIII. 24-30.

24. Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

25. But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

26. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

27. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed

in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?

28. He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

29. But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

30. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn.

It should have been abundantly evident that all that is said in Scripture of "the kingdom of heaven,"

or "of God," cannot possibly be realised in a dispensation of election.

The period of grace now enjoyed is only the preliminary to "the kingdom of heaven" in manifestation, for which Christians pray every time they use the words taught by the Messiah to His Jewish disciples, "Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven."

Matt. vi.
10.

Rom. xvi.
25, 26.

"The kingdom of heaven" is certainly not the Church, for that was a mystery kept secret for generations and ages, and not revealed till long after all the parables were spoken by Jesus to the Jews concerning their promised national blessings. It would have been quite out of place to have discoursed to them of things as they are among the Gentiles, whilst they are cast off in their present "Lo-ammi" (not my people) condition.

Hos. i. 10.

Another reason why this parable cannot teach concerning the Church of this dispensation is, that it speaks only of the sowing and reaping times; the intervening period being passed over in silence, as is usual in prophecy.

The parable of the tares is of peculiar importance, as in the explanation of it, the thirty-eighth and forty-first verses plainly declare that "the kingdom" is the world, not as it is now, but as it will be after it is redeemed and regenerated at the coming of the Redeemer: of which time it is written, "The Lord reigneth: . . . the world also is established, so that it cannot be moved."

Ps. xciii. 1.

Heb. i. 6;
ii. 5.

Deut. xi.
21; Dan.
vii. 27; ii.
44; Num.
xiv. 21.

The new earth is called in Greek "the habitable earth," and "the future habitable earth," whereon "Israel's days shall be as the days of heaven upon the earth," in "the kingdom under the whole" (new) "heaven."

Its inhabitants must be men in the flesh, not resurrection saints, for whom "some better thing is provided, even an inheritance" eternal in the heavens.

The sower is the Jewish Messiah, the son of David, who is to sit on David's throne; therefore He is called "the son of man."

"The good seed" are "the children of the kingdom,"—a term appropriated to the Jewish people generally: and here it denotes the godly remnant amongst them.

The tares are the children of the wicked one; followers of the anti-Messiah, possessed of the devil, as Judas was. Their end is to be burnt in Gehenna.

The result of the Lord's having sown good seed in His field is shown here: and how, though the seed was good, there will be tares in it at harvest time.

In the night of His absence, His enemy the devil sowed tares in His field. The meaning of the word "field" is wider in this than the preceding parable, for after the ascension of Jesus, the sowing of His good seed was extended by His express command to the then known world. This sowing may be called His, because it was done by His apostles, who were His ambassadors.

All sowers are not ambassadors; for to be an ambassador it is needful to have seen the king, and to have a direct commission from him to act as his representative, and in his stead. This was the case of the apostles, but of no other men. They had no successors; and they claimed to have fulfilled their commission so completely, that they said they had preached "the Gospel to every creature under heaven."

The word "kosmos" (world), therefore, means no more here than it does in other parts of Scripture—

Isa. lxxv.
17-19.
Heb. xi. 40.
1 Pet. i. 4;
2 Cor. v. 1.
Luke, i. 32,
33.
Matt. viii.
12.
Isa. x. 20;
Ps. xxii.
30.

2 Cor. v.
20.

Rom. x. 18;
1 Thess. i.
8; 2 Tim.
iv. 17.
Col. i. 23,
6.

viz., the then known world or prophetic earth, as exemplified in Rom. i. 8, and Col. i. 6.

1 Thess. ii. 8. The power of the devil was then unrestrained : it was shown in hindering the work of the apostles ;
1 John, iv. 1-3 ; iii. 8. in raising up many antichrists ; and sowing the
1 Tim. iv. 1. leaven of false doctrine.

Rev. xiv. 15 ; Joel, iii. 12, 13 ; ver. 49. Thus at "the harvest" there will be many tares to root out generally, but specially in Israel's land, both of Jews and Gentiles. Nevertheless, there will be no lack of guests to fill the places of apostate Jews at the marriage supper, for "many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven," when "the children of the kingdom" shall be gathered out of it, with "all things that offend."

Matt. viii. 11, 12. "The servants" of the householder mean primarily the Lord's Jewish disciples, who actually inquired on one occasion if they should call down fire from heaven, as Elijah did, to destroy some persons who would not receive them or their message.

Luke, ix. 51-56. The harvest is to be at the conclusion of the age—the age of God's miraculous dealings directly with the Jews, both as a Church and nation : the field between the sowing and the reaping being left, as it were, to itself ; the Messiah rejected and absent, and His nation dispersed until "the time of the end" draws nigh.

Dan. xii. 4, 9 ; viii. 17, 19. The reaping of the earth (land of Israel), which is the gathering out of the wicked, will be the work of angels, who, we know, are to attend the coming of the Lord with all His saints to the Mount of Olives.

Zech. xiv. 5 ; Jude, xiv. Ver. 30, 41. The gathering out of the tares is to precede the gathering in of the wheat ; so it is those who are left in the earth, not those who are taken out of it to be burnt, who will become the "blessed" that are to

Matt. xxiv. 40, 41 ;
Luke, xvii. 34-36.

shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father—viz., the godly Jewish remnant, who are “to inherit the land and dwell therein for ever.”

Ps. xxxvii.
29; Matt.
v. 5.

This similitude must not be considered as too glorious to comport with the earthly blessedness of the Jews, for we find it used in this connection in the typical song of triumph chaunted over Israel’s destruction of Jabin’s hosts: “So let Thine enemies perish, O Lord: but let them that love Him be as the sun when he goeth down in his might.” “They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.”

Judges, v.
31.

Dan. xii. 3.

The Messiah’s kingdom is the garner or barn, the floor or surface of which is to be thoroughly purged. The furnace of fire is Gehenna or Hell, called in Scripture “the lake of fire and brimstone,” which produces “the second death.” It is a place of everlasting punishment prepared for the devil and his angels, the Antichrist and his false prophet, who, with apostate Jews and wicked Gentiles in league with them, will be among the tares that are then to be cast into Gehenna.

Matt. iii.
12; Luke,
iii. 17.

Rev. xx. 14,
15.
Matt. xxv.
41.

Rev. xix.
20.
Rev. xxi. 8.
Ver. 40, 41.

Angels will afterwards gather the Lord’s “elect,” “with a great sound of a trumpet,” “from every quarter,” into the earthly department of the Redeemer’s kingdom (which will consist of two spheres), at the dispensation of the fulness of times, when He will unite all things in heaven and in earth into one glorious whole. The “elect” spoken of in the Old Testament and in the Gospels must be carefully distinguished from “the elect” of the Epistles, who belong to the Church, and are the saints of the “heavenly calling.” By these later scriptures we learn that ere ever the gathering out of the tares be-

Matt. xxiv.
31; Mark,
xiii. 27.

Zech. viii.
7, 8; Isa.
xliii. 5, 6.

Eph. i. 10.
Isa. lxxv. 9,
22.

Matt. xxiv.
22, 24;
Mark, xiii.
20, 22;
Luke, xviii.
7.

Rom. viii.
33; 2 Tim.
ii. 10;

Titus, i. 1; gins, or any other act is performed, the Bride will be
 1 Pet. i. 2. caught up to meet the Lord in the air the moment
 Heb. iii. 1. He appears, and so will ever be with the Lord in
 1 Thess. iv. glory.
 16, 17.
 Col. iii. 4.

The object of this parable is to show the final separation of the righteous and the wicked is to be made by the Lord himself.

If the meaning of this parable and of the phrase "the kingdom of heaven" had been rightly apprehended by English Churchmen, would they ever have adopted that unscriptural principle with regard to the formation of a Church of "the widest possible comprehension"? Could they ever have boasted of "the comprehensiveness of their Church," as if that was the true lesson to be learnt from the Messiah's prohibition to gather out the tares before the harvest? Could they have invented anything more diametrically opposite in principle and practice to the Church of Christ in the apostles' days?

And if Roman Catholics had not misunderstood this parable, misapplying it also to their Church, they could not have taken the apostles' miraculous power of discipline in the Lord's primitive apostolic Church as a warrant to burn and otherwise destroy all who were heretics in their eyes, because the tares at "the conclusion of the age" are to be cast into a furnace of fire.

THE MUSTARD SEED.

MATT. XIII. 31, 32.

31. Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field :
 32. Which indeed is the least of

all seeds ; but when it is grown, it of the air come and lodge in the
is the greatest among herbs, and branches thereof.
becometh a tree, so that the birds

COMPARE WITH MARK, IV. 30-32, AND LUKE, XIII. 18, 19.

This parable is not interpreted by Jesus, but it must be explained in unison with His teaching elsewhere. It does not predict that the visible Church by Gospel preaching will convert the whole world before His return to Zion in power and great glory ; on the contrary, He predicts that, "as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man:" and this is confirmed by the Apostle Paul, who declares that "in the last days perilous times shall come ; . . . that evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." Luke, xvii.
24-30.
2 Tim. iii.
1, 13.

This parable extends to a time beyond the harvest, and passes over the period intervening between the sowing of the seed and its full development : if it were not so, consistency would oblige us to say that the growth of the mustard seed means antichristianism, and "the birds of the air" the same as the fowls in the parable of the Sower. The growth of a great tree does not suggest the idea of corruption as produced by leaven : it is the growth of this great tree from the smallest of all seeds that constitutes the figure in this parable. Ver. 4, 19.

The sower ("a man") is the meek and lowly Jesus. The dominion of Jesus in the field that is to become "the kingdom of heaven," was in the days of the Son of man like unto a grain of mustard seed, proverbially, but not literally, "the least of all seeds," inasmuch as at the first it consisted of a king with the fewest of all followers—"a little flock"—the twelve disciples and some publicans and sinners.

Where the mustard seed was sown is sufficiently

Ps. x. 16. indicated by the place being called "His field,"—the same land of which it is written prophetically, "The Lord is King for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of His land."

Since the Scripture passes over the wandering time of the Jews as if it did not exist, the wickedness to be manifested in the perilous last days, and its extinction at the harvest;—we see in this parable the miraculous rapidity with which the least of all seeds will, at the return of the King, be developed into the greatest of all kingdoms; with, "when it is grown," all nations and languages serving and worshipping Jehovah-Jesus for ever. It is the fifth kingdom, the kingdom of "the Stone of Israel," which is to break in pieces the preceding four, representing "the times of the Gentiles;" "and it shall stand for ever." The kingdoms of this world cannot become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ until the seventh angel has sounded the seventh and last trumpet: then it is that the subjugation of all nations to the sway of the Redeemer, and their gathering to rest for ever under the shadow of His wings in His ever-increasingly glorious kingdom, will take place.

There is nothing contrary to this view in the simile of a great tree being also used in Scripture with regard to King Nebuchadnezzar; to the Antichrist sent by God against the future boasting king of Egypt; and the godly remnant of Israel, whom the Lord will replant in their own land, never to be rooted out of it again: the promise is thus beautifully expressed:—
 Dan. iv. 10-12, and 20-22. "Thus saith the Lord God; I will also take of the highest branch" (Judah) "of the highest cedar" (Israel),
 Ps. xxxvii. 34, 35; "and will set it; I will crop off from the top of His young twigs a tender one" (the remnant), "and will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent" (Zion):
 Ezek. xxxi. 2-9; xvii. 22-24.
 Isa. lx. 21, 22.
 Amos, ix. 15.

“in the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it; and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar: and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing: in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell.”

THE LEAVEN.

MATT. XIII. 33.

33. Another parable spake he a woman took and hid in three unto them; The kingdom of measures of meal, till the whole heaven is like unto leaven, which was leavened.

COMPARE WITH LUKE, XIII. 20, 21.

If it be said that the parables of the leaven and the mustard seed point to a universal diffusion of the truth in this dispensation, we reply, at no time has the truth as it is in Jesus spread universally like leaven, and it never will; for its purpose is to gather out an election to reign with Christ in heavenly glory, when He comes the second time to redeem the world from the hand of the enemy, and bring all nations to life as from the dead.

Col. i. 27.

Rom. xi.
15.

Leaven everywhere in Scripture, without exception, means something evil. When typically used in the offerings of old, it denoted sin and imperfection in the offerers: when Christ and Christ alone was typified, there might be no leaven introduced. Thus specially the paschal bread must be unleavened, since in “Christ our passover” there was no sin; whilst in certain offerings of thanksgiving made by imperfect worshippers, leaven was to be introduced. The Lord spoke of leaven in an evil sense, but never in a

Exod. xiii.
3.

Heb. iv. 15.

Amos, iv.;
5; Lev.
xxiii. 17.

Matt. xvi. 6, 11, 12. good one ; "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy : " and Paul also used the term as
 1 Cor. v. 7, 8 ; Gal. v. indicative of evil only.

9.
 Matt. iii. 12. "The kingdom of heaven " here means particularly the land of Israel—the field, or floor that is to be thoroughly purged from evil and evil-doers, and then become the Redeemer's "kingdom of heaven " for the Jewish nation.

Though the leaven will penetrate into the whole of the three measures of meal, they cannot symbolise the whole globe ;—they include at most the prophetic earth.

Gen. xviii. 6. Three measures of meal was the quantity required for a woman to bake at one time : this suggests the idea of limitation, and not of universality. The hiding by a woman corresponds with the sowing of tares by the devil in Immanuel's land by night.

Rev. xvii. 3, 6, 18. We must remember that a woman in Scripture is the symbol of a church, and also of a very wicked city. We therefore see an obvious identity between

2 Thess. ii. 7. the leaven here with "the mystery of iniquity," which worked so soon in the Jewish apostolic Church (with Gentiles graft into it), which at the first was as

1 Cor. v. 7. a pure unleavened lump ; and also with the ripened iniquity of "the last days," when the anti-Messiah

Rev. xi. 8 ; Isa. i. 21, 27. will reign in great Babylon of the Apocalypse (anti-christian Jerusalem) for forty-two months, and "all

Rev. xiii. 5 ; Dan. vii. 25. that dwell on the earth " (land of Israel) "shall worship him," except those whose names are in the

Rev. xiii. 7, 8. Lamb's Book of Life.

This should teach us that Antichristianism is a very different thing from Popery. It is not denied that the leaven of corrupted Christianity has in the intervening time spread among the Gentiles ; but as Scripture only gives details of what happens to the

Jews when in their own land, and never mentions the Gentiles except as connected with the Jews when there, Popery, and other Gentile deviations "from the faith once delivered to the saints," are quite overpassed in the New Testament; and those which the apostles do write about very particularly are the first and last Jewish antichrists, the blasphemous results of satanic leaven.

The apostle John testified of his own days, "many 2 John, 7. deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is 1 John, iv. 3. not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and now already it is in the world." The same apostle also predicts the last Jewish anti-Messiah in the following manner: "Ye have heard that antichrist shall come: he is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son." He is "the man of sin," whose coming 1 John, ii. 18. is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders: who Scripture declares 1 John, ii. 22. 2 Thess. ii. 4-9. shall exalt himself above every one that is called God, Dan. xi. 36. or that is worshipped; insomuch that he will sit in the temple of God (in Jerusalem), "showing himself that he is God."

This, then, is what the leaven in this parable is to produce. How different and yet how evil is the effect of leaven among the Gentiles! It is the anti-Messiah, not Popery, that is doomed in the Apocalypse. Does not the Scripture bear witness that "every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God"? Now, if this scripture is to be applied to this parenthetical overpassed period, Popery and every wicked Pope are of God.

Rev. xix.
20.

1 John, iv.
2.

There is no escape from this conclusion, for Popery owns the Lord has come in the flesh, and worships the Virgin Mary because she was instrumental to His incarnation: and it is only as the representative of the Virgin's son that the Pope claims to have power over all men.

TREASURE HID IN A FIELD.

MATT. XIII. 44.

44. Again, the kingdom of hath found, he hideth, and for joy heaven is like unto treasure hid in thereof goeth and selleth all that a field; the which when a man he hath, and buyeth that field.

Ver. 36. Jesus here again teaches His disciples, apart from the multitude. Former parables set forth the prophetic history of the land that is to become "the kingdom of heaven:" this parable shows the way by which a Jew, believing in Jesus as the promised King of his nation, was to obtain a portion in that kingdom.

We shall be assisted to understand this parable by recollecting that the words "kingdom" and "king" in Scripture are sometimes used interchangeably; and by keeping in remembrance that nothing was revealed concerning the mystery of the Church till long after all the parables had been spoken, and the Messiah rejected. Nevertheless, there has been an election gathered into the Church of "the heavenly calling" from the beginning; taken out differently in different dispensations, but all given to Christ in the everlasting covenant, and all saved by His all-atoning sacrifice, unknown to many of them.

Heb. xiii.
20.

Matt. xvi.
21, 22;
Mark, ix.
10.

"The kingdom of heaven" would have been manifested at the Messiah's first coming, if the Jews had known (or understood) the time of their merciful visitation. The kingdom came not then with observation, as it will do hereafter in power and great glory: it was hid, or secretly, "among" the Jews (for so should the word "within" be translated in Luke, xvii. 21.) The Redeemer's person was then "within" the nation, but secretly, and needing to be sought, therefore the Jews were assured that the kingdom of God was come nigh unto them.

Luke, xix.
41-44

Luke, xvii.
20.
Matt. xxvi.
64; xxiv.
30.

Luke, x. 9.
11.

We pause here to remark, that the Lord's discourse in Luke, xvii. was addressed to Pharisees who believed in the kingdom, for they inquired in the 20th verse when it should appear; but they did not believe in Jesus as the Messiah, and that their king was "among" them; and as there was neither love nor faith in the hearts of these Pharisees, the kingdom of God could not be "within" them: besides, "the kingdom of heaven," being both material and future, how could it get "within" any man's heart?

Jesus invited the Jews to come unto Him, and commanded them to seek for the kingdom of heaven, promising that those who sought should find; and to those who knocked at the door of the kingdom (Himself), it should be opened. They were commanded to "seek first the kingdom of heaven;" for if they laid up treasure there, as individuals all their earthly wants should be supplied; and if they repented as a nation, all things would be given or restored unto Israel.

Matt. xix.
21.

Matt. vi.
33; Luke,
xii. 31, 32.

John, x. 7.
9.
Luke xi. 9,
10.

Matt. vi.
31-33.
Acts, i. 6.

Luke, xii.

31, 32.
Matt. vii.
13, 14.

But few did seek and find at that time; for strait was the gate and narrow the way which led unto life, and few there were that found it. The command

to "sell all" and give to the poor was a requisition that made the gate strait and narrow to the Jews. The rich young man was anxious to obtain "eternal life;" but the selling of all his goods and following Jesus in person was a severer trial than he could bear, though without it his previous meritorious law-keeping was of no avail, now that the King was present, requiring personal attendance and new proofs of belief in His Messiahship, which were among the new things that made it hard then for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Matt. xix.
16-23;
Mark, x.
17-30;
Luke, xviii.
18-30.

Matt. xiii.
52.

Heb. x. 20.

We cannot proceed till we have asked our readers to consider whether "the new and living way" is now narrow to us, as the gate of the kingdom was strait to the Jews in the days when "grace and truth" were only beginning to appear. Does not grace reign now triumphant over law, and is not "the door" opened wide? Should the Saviour's full, free, unmerited favour obtained for us by His death and righteousness ever be called a strait gate?

We come now to the explanation of the parable of the "man" seeking for treasure in a field.

The word "field" occurs twice in it, and on both occasions means the same as in the parable of the sower; for it was in the land of Israel only that the Messiah preached the kingdom, and in Judea and "Galilee of the Gentiles" (a district of Palestine) that He chiefly performed His wonderful works, which plainly showed His ability to supply all the needs of those that had faith to follow Him.

Mark, i. 14,
39.
Matt. iv.
15, 23.
Matt. xiv.
15-21;
Luke, ix.
12-17.
Matt. xi.
28-30;
John, vii.
37; Luke,
vi. 47.

Whenever, therefore, a Jew in those days sought the Messiah, and obeyed His invitations by coming to Him wherever He was, he heard the "word of the kingdom"—received and hid it in his heart with joy, not telling any one of the treasure he had found,

because Jesus commanded His disciples not to tell what they had seen of Him "till the Son of man should be risen from the dead." Immediately he sold all that he had and bought that field, obtaining thereby treasure in the future "kingdom of heaven," and eternal life in it. Thus did Messiah's then "little flock," to whom it was His good pleasure to give "the kingdom."

Mark, viii.
30; Matt.
xvi. 20;
Mark, ix. 9.
Luke, ix.
21.
Matt. xvii.
9.
Luke, xii.
29-34.

Entrance into it at that time was not free, as it is now, by "the Gospel of the grace of God," without the deeds of the (Mosaic) law. The promise to them was, "Verily, I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the Gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the age to come eternal life."

Mark, x.
29. 30.

This was spoken before the sins were committed that delayed the manifestation of the kingdom, and the literal fulfilment of such promises as these. But as surely as the persecutions came, so will the rewards in the next world for sacrifices made in this. These diligent searchers became "the good seed," or "the children of the kingdom."

Matt. xiii.
38.

We cannot suppose that they would be disappointed if in the end they were to find themselves in the heavenly Mount Sion belonging to the Church of "the first-born ones;" for do we not see there "the spirits of just men made perfect," who were gathered in the Jewish dispensation, and by faith in earthly promises?

Heb. xii.
22, 23.

It has been asserted of late years that the precious doctrine of the Atonement should be preached with reserve, which is maintained by reference to the

Messiah's ministry among the Jews sometimes forbidding His disciples to make Him known to them. The Lord did practise reserve on the subject of His suffering, to test the Jewish people with regard to the kingdom, and to evidence His crucifixion as their act.

GOODLY PEARLS;
OR, ONE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE.

MATT. XIII. 45, 46.

45. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls : 46. Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

We believe the "One pearl of great price" means the Messiah's kingdom that is to be, and the "Goodly pearls" are His promises of reward in that kingdom.

The Jews to whom this parable was spoken were under Mosiac law, which required them to be righteous, that they might be rewarded according to their works.

Matt. xvi.
27.

The merchantman represents all the Jews of the Messiah's day who sought Jesus, that they might hear "the word of the kingdom."

A "merchantman" having found one pearl of great value—the kingdom, or rather the way into it—believing in the Messiah's power and willingness to perform His promises of reward (goodly pearls),—viz., an hundred-fold more than he then possessed, with everlasting life,—"went and sold all that he had, that he might buy that one pearl (the kingdom) by the sacrifice of all his earthly goods, and the severance of all his earthly ties." Thus did he seek

Matt. xix.
29.

Matt. x. 37-
39.

first "the kingdom of heaven," believing that all other things would be added unto him. Matt. vi. 33.

The Lord had a right to require His disciples to give up all they possessed for His sake and the Gospel's (of the kingdom), because all they had was His, and given by Him to test their faith.

Every man was required to act for himself independently of others in the matter of obedience and salvation to eternal life in the Redeemer's kingdom, that dispensation being different from the present or any other that preceded it. Every disciple was commanded in those days to take up his cross and follow Jesus: and taking up the cross then signified selling all possessions and forsaking all friends, "otherwise they could not be His disciples."

The kingdom (the pearl) was of great price indeed; for it cost not only all the worldly goods of the Jewish searchers after it, but also the whole life's blood of the King.

The parable of "Goodly pearls," or "One pearl of great price," has generally been treated as though this were something which *we* must obtain—a mode of interpretation similar to that which is usually applied to the "treasure hid in a field," and equally contradictory to the freeness of "the Gospel of the grace of God," and justification by faith only amongst Gentiles.

When this parable is applied to Christianity and the Church as it is now, the notion is introduced of all being given up for the sake of Christ or of the Gospel—in fact, to *procure* salvation—a doctrine utterly opposed to Christian faith: it is Popery,—a specimen of that corrupted Christianity which rejoices to profit from human ignorance and superstition, saying, "Sell all, and give to the Church,"

Luke, xiv.
26, 27, 33.

"Do good works, and expect in the next world a proportionate reward."

Both these errors are misunderstandings of Jewish teaching for a short and very peculiar time: they nourish self-righteousness, and are irreconcilable with what the Spirit says by Paul, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast:" "not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

Eph. ii. 8, 9.
2 Tim. i. 9.
Tit. iii. 5.

And is there not a lesson here which most people have yet to learn,—the great difference in doctrine between the Gospels and the Epistles?

Applying this parable and that of "Treasure hid in a field" to believing Jews in the Messiah's day takes away all doctrinal difficulties, and removes the cause of the gravest error.

THE DRAW NET.

MATT. XIII. 47-50.

47. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:

48. Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

49. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,

50. And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

It must now be apparent that in all the parables contained in the 13th chapter of Matthew, the phrase "the kingdom of heaven" is used, as it were, in a shorthand manner, referring sometimes to one thing,

sometimes to another, connected intimately with the Messiah's future kingdom.

Here its meaning is, "the word of the kingdom" is like that sort of seine net that catches fish of every kind when cast into the sea.

The word "sea" teaches us that this parable is no mere repetition of that of the tares, only in a different form; but that it deals chiefly with Gentiles, because the sea is symbolic of all nations other than the Jews.

This will scarcely be admitted by those people, and they are many, who are unacquainted with prophecy. We shall therefore endeavour to prove this point by some convincing texts; though departing in no degree from the position, that in Scripture Gentiles are only mentioned when connected with the Lord's chosen nation. This, indeed, will be seen in the texts about to be quoted.

At "the time of the end," to which this parable particularly refers, "all nations" of the prophetic earth will be gathered "against the Lord and His anointed" (Israel), under the anti-Messiah, with the avowed purpose of cutting off the partially restored Jews, and putting the name of Israel out of remembrance for ever: thus will the land that is to become "the kingdom of heaven" be in "the last days" full of Gentiles.

The apostle John saw in vision of the future a beast rise up out of the sea; that great symbolic sea out of which arose the Gentile nations which have had dominion over the Jews, and are in "the time of the end" to be restored, and to combine against them "like the sea and the waves roaring;" being the "many waters" which, as a flood of mighty waters, overflowing Israel's land, shall cause "the great tribu-

Dan. xii. 4.

9.

Joel. iii. 2.

Ps. ii. 2.

Ps. lxxxiii.

3-5.

Rev. xiii. 1.

Dan. vii. 2.

3; ii. 31-33.

Isa. v. 30;

Luke, xxi.

25.

Rev. xvii.

1, 15.

Isa. xxviii.

2.

Mark, xiii.

19, 20.

Jer. xxx.
7; Dan.
xii. 1.

lation" of "Jacob's trouble," out of which the godly remnant will cry to be delivered.

Ps. clxiv.
7; xviii. 3-
15.

Isa. xxvii.
1; lix. 20.

Rev. xxi. 1.

Isa. lvii. 20.

Isa. lx. 5.

It is in the midst of that symbolic sea that the anti-Messiah will be slain by the Redeemer at His coming to Zion: that sea which shall exist no more after His kingdom is established, when no more Gentile nations in rebellious commotion, like the sea casting up nothing but mire and dirt, shall disturb its rest and peace: but wherein "the abundance of the sea and the forces of the Gentiles shall be converted unto Jerusalem, the capital of the Messiah's regenerated kingdom."

Mark, i. 17.

Acts, xiii.

45, 46;

1 Thess. ii.

15, 16.

"The word of the kingdom" was proclaimed by the Lord's Jewish "fishers of men" to the Gentiles when the unbelieving Jews refused any longer to listen to it.

During the Jews' dispersion, the doctrines of grace for the Church revealed to Paul have been preached to the Gentiles; and the good news of "the kingdom" has been so completely silenced, that its meaning even is now little understood.

But in "the last days" there is to be a resumed preaching of "the Gospel of the kingdom" as a witness unto all nations: not of course converting them

14.

all into what is called the Christian Church, but gathering both good and bad fish into the net of "the word of the kingdom," preached in no ordinary way, but with the miraculous power of those days, to

Rev. xiv. 6.

Matt. xxiv.

3, 14;

1 Cor. xv.

24.

"them that dwell on the earth" (land of Israel), "and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people:" "and then shall the end come."

This parable brings out the issue to the Gentiles at that momentous time—the time of judgment. The shore to which the net is to be drawn is the Jews' land, where all their Gentile enemies will have been

gathered, in order that the final and complete severance here predicted may be made by angels of the wicked Jews and Gentiles from among the "just"—viz., the godly Jewish remnant, who answer to the wheat in the parable of the tares; for no Gentiles are ever called "the just," unless, like the centurion, they became proselytes to the Jews' religion. Acts, x. 22.

The officiating angels are the same who separate the tares from the wheat, and reap the harvest and vine of the earth. Matt. xiii. 30.
Rev. xiv. 13-20.

The wicked shall be cast into Gehenna, the lake of fire and brimstone, where will be "weeping and gnashing of teeth," for then is the time for final judgment. Rev. xxi. 8.

It is observable that the good fish are said to be gathered into "vessels;" if any of them are Gentiles and not the just, some light as to what is meant by "vessels" may possibly be obtained from the parable of "the Sheep and the goats," which predicts the judgment of *living* Gentile nations. Matt. xxv. 31-46.

THINGS NEW AND OLD.

MATT. XIII. 51, 52.

51. Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.
52. Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe *which is in-*structed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *that is* an householder which bringeth forth out of his treasure *things* new and old.

Jesus came to confirm the promises made unto the fathers. These promises are contained in the law and the prophets, of which Jesus said to the Jews, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." Rom. xv. 8.
Matt. v. 17.

Assuredly we have proof that the Lord instructed His disciples in "the things pertaining to the *kingdom of God*" to the very end of His ministry, for their last question to their ascending Messiah referred to the time of its coming; therefore the explanation often given, that "the kingdom of heaven" means the true invisible Church, cannot for a moment be consistently maintained with this or any other parable.

Here Jesus teaches what was necessary to fit His disciples to become teachers concerning the kingdom of heaven—viz., things both "new and old."

New to them were all the requisites with regard to worldly things, which then made it hard for a rich man to get into "the kingdom of heaven." And as to the old, "the kingdom under the whole heaven" might well be called an old thing, for it was the great object of hope from first to last of the Jews as a nation. Every Jew conversant with the law and the prophets could not do otherwise than hope for its manifestation. All early intimations respecting it were the old things needful for every scribe instructed into the preaching of "the kingdom;" and they were also, in the estimation of the Jewish Messiah, treasures that were not to lose their value, or to be superseded by the new things which he now made so requisite, that without them his followers could not be his disciples.

Many other things were also new. New to the Jews was this first manifestation of their king in the person of the meek and lowly Jesus, so poor He had not where to lay His head; instead of the glorious sovereign of whom Solomon was but the type. New too was his perfect example, fulfilling all righteousness of the law; teaching them not only to love

their neighbours, but to love their enemies, to bless them that cursed them, to do good to them that hated them, that they might be the children of their Father which is in heaven. But especially it was a new thing to the Jews, the Messiah's free forgiveness of sins without the deeds of the law: they asked in amazement, "Who can forgive sins but God?" And still more were they astonished when He claimed to be "the Son of God"—"the Lord of the Sabbath"—and though David's son, in reality David's Lord.

Matt. v. 43-45.

Mark, ii.

7.

Luke, v. 21-26.

John, x. 36.

Luke, vi.

5.

Mark, ii.

27, 28.

Matt. xxii.

41-46.

THAT WHICH DEFILETH.

MATT. xv. 10-20.

10. And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand:

11. Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.

12. Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?

13. But He answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.

14. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

15. Then answered Peter and

said unto him, Declare unto us this parable.

16. And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding?

17. Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?

18. But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.

19. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

20. These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.

COMPARE WITH MARK, vii. 14-23.

The unwashed hands of Christ's disciples gave occasion to this discourse, called in verse 15 a "parable."

It relates to the Pharisees who were offended at

Isa. vi. 9, 10; xxix. 13. the intimation that they were blind leaders of their blinded nation.

They and their followers prided themselves on keeping the traditions of the elders, and on some acts of outward worship; whilst they shut their eyes to the light which was among them, and fell into that unbelief which ended in the crucifixion of their King, and the blasphemy of the Holy Ghost.

This caused them to be the cut-off branches, or the plant that should be rooted up.

The Jews were accordingly rooted out of their land by the Romans, and thus nationally fell into the ditch prophetically hinted at by the Lord.

Nevertheless, though blindness has happened to Israel "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in," or "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled," God's covenant with His ancient people remains as good as ever, so that their eyes shall yet be opened to "see out of obscurity and out of darkness."

We have here an example of the Messiah's teaching of new things, for distinctions between meats "clean and unclean" were clearly in force by the law of Moses, yet the Lord only declared what is true, that no eating of any kind of food could make a man really unclean, only ceremonially so. We do not find abrogation of Mosaic law here, but a reproof of the puerile observances of the Pharisees which made the commandments of God of none effect; and a commencement of that spiritual teaching respecting the war between the flesh and the Spirit, which was afterwards developed by the apostle Paul.

That apostle, in his Epistle to the Galatians, traces to the flesh and hearts of men a list of sins in entire agreement with the Redeemer's words here: and so comprehensive is Paul's catalogue of men's sins, we

are quite at a loss to find any remaining to lay to the charge of the devil, who we believe is restrained in this dispensation, and often falsely accused of having power to tempt men inwardly, thus destroying human responsibility: but thus saith the Word of God, "the carnal mind" (or heart) "is enmity against God:" "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh;" "a good man, out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things: and an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil."

Rom. viii.
7.
Matt. xii.
34, 35.
Luke. vi.
45.

THE LOST SHEEP.

MATT. XVIII. 11-14.

11. For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.

12. How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?

13. And if so be that he find it,

verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that *sheep*, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.

14. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

COMPARE WITH LUKE, XV. 3-7.

The connection in which we find this parable in Matthew's Gospel, warrants us to believe that Jesus was teaching His disciples a lesson in humility from His own willingness to leave heaven to seek and to save the lost sheep of the house of Israel—namely, publicans and sinners, and even the little children then around Him; for however insignificant they might appear, the angels of such of them as believed in Him always beheld the face of His Father, who

Ver. 1-6.

Matt. xv.
24; ix. 10-
13; Mark,
ii. 17;
Luke, v.
31, 32.
Mark, x.
15, 16.

willed that not even one of those little ones should perish.

The disciples, desiring great exaltation in the kingdom, questioned Jesus concerning it. The Lord did not immediately touch this point in His reply, but, as recorded elsewhere, directed the attention of His disciples to the way of entering into it, rebuking the spirit that was in them, saying, "Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them: it should not be so with you. Whosoever will be great among you, he shall be your minister" (or servant—he shall wait upon you); "and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be the servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto" (waited upon), "but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Ver. 1.

Mark, x.
42-45.

The Messiah must have spoken this parable of the lost sheep to different people at different times. Luke says the Scribes and Pharisees murmured at His receiving publicans and sinners, and eating with them who had been lost sheep.

Ver. 1, 2.

It teaches that He rejoiced over the conversion of one such sinner, as a man over a sheep found, as the woman over the piece of silver regained, and as the angels in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.

The Logos, as the shepherd of Israel, came from heaven to the mountains of Israel to seek and to save that which was lost (meaning astray), who were the elect He gathered at His first advent; but He laid down His life for the whole house of Israel. When the shepherd was smitten the sheep were scattered; but at His second advent, "He that scattered Israel will gather Him as a shepherd doth his flock." The lost sheep He will seek out from all places, and will bring them to their own land, and will feed them upon

John, xi.
50-52.

Zech. xiii.
7.

Jer. xxxi.
10.

Ps. cxix.
176; Jer.
1. 6, 7; Isa.
liiii. 6; Ps.
lxxix. 13.

the mountains of Israel, and make them one nation under one king, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more: and He will make a covenant of peace with them, an everlasting covenant which shall never be broken. The Lord will rejoice and rest in His love (over Israel the lost sheep), with joy and singing. He says, "I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people."

Ezek.
xxxiv. 11-16.
Ezek.
xxxvii. 21-28.
Isa. liv. 10.
Micah, ii. 12.
Zeph. iii. 17.
Isa. lxxv. 19.

Though the Lord possessed the universe, He came to seek and to save that which was lost; not individual sinners only, not the nation only, but the Church—the nation—and the world itself.

After the regeneration, when this redeemed kingdom shall show forth His glory, and His Jewish nation will be restored to His favour, united to Him for ever, "He will rejoice" (also) "with gladness above His fellows" (the redeemed in heaven): "He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied."

Ps. xlv. 7.
Isa. liii. 11.

But who are the ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance? We reply, the ninety-nine sheep that did not go astray are the Scribes and Pharisees who did keep the law, and therefore did not need the prodigal's repentance.

Luke, xv.

This class of Scribes and Pharisees is represented by the elder son in the parable of the prodigal, who was "ever with the Father;" and not having departed from Him, they are called "just persons."

All Scribes and Pharisees were not hypocrites, nor were they all like those Scribes and Pharisees who were "blind leaders of the blind," who made vain and of none effect the commandments of God by the traditions of men, and thus broke the law. Some kept the law; and being zealous for its observance, murmured at the Messiah's reception of sinners.

Matt. xxiii.
23. 33-
Matt. xv.
7-9.
Mark, vii.
13.
John, ix.
31.

The parable of the lost sheep in Luke's Gospel being

incomplete without those of the lost piece of silver and the prodigal son, we shall insert them here. Altogether, they form a perfect and harmonious whole.

THE LOST PIECE OF SILVER.

LUKE, xv. 8-10.

8. Either what woman, having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?
 9. And when she hath found it, she calleth *her* friends and *her* neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.
 10. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

Though this parable is not to be found in the Gospel by Matthew, it and the prodigal son must not be separated from the parable of the lost sheep, because they throw light upon and confirm each other.

Much is sometimes made of the mention of a woman here, as if she must needs symbolise the Church. It is admitted that in Scripture Eve is a type of Christ's body, the elect Church; and that the women in Rev. xvii. 1, and Rev. xii. 1, represent a very wicked city, and a nation in great distress: but the Church cannot be alluded to in the parables, for reasons already assigned, and because it was a mystery hid from generations and ages till the kingdom was rejected.

Eph. iii. 2-8; Col. i. 25-27.

In the parable of the lost sheep, the seeker was the most prominent point; here it is the persevering, diligent sweeping, prompted by the Saviour's love: the woman is mentioned only as the means by which

the sweeping was effected, because women are always the agents by which houses are cleansed and kept in order.

This woman, therefore, who diligently sought the lost piece of silver, and rejoiced with her friends when she found it, represents how perseveringly Jesus sought for His wandering publicans and sinners. He rejoiced when one of them repented, as a man rejoices more over one sheep that is found than over the ninety and nine that went not astray. Ver. 1, 2.
Luke, v. 32.

The house means "the house of Israel" where the coin was lost, and where the personal searching and sweeping love of the Messiah was shown forth to publicans and sinners, represented by one of the precious metals, which teaches they were of great value to the Redeemer, and were watched over by the angels in heaven, who rejoiced when they repented.

But however great was their rejoicing, we may believe that God in whose presence they stand rejoiceth more; and as if to establish this, and to teach the depth of the Father's love, Jesus immediately spoke the parable of the prodigal son.

THE PRODIGAL SON.

LUKE, xv. 11-32.

11. And he said, A certain man had two sons:

12. And the younger of them said to *his* father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to *me*. And he divided unto them *his* living.

13. And not many days after,

the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

14. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

15. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

16. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

17. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

18. I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned before heaven, and before thee,

19. And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

20. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

21. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

22. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

23. And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:

24. For this my son was dead,

and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

25. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing.

26. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.

27. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

28. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him.

29. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

30. But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

31. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

32. It was meet that we should make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

This parable, and those of the lost sheep and the lost piece of silver, were all three delivered at the same time, and partly with the same object—to justify the Lord in receiving and associating with sinners.

The parable of the prodigal son was spoken in reply to the murmurings of the Scribes and Pharisees, who were offended that Jesus consorted with publicans and sinners. These publicans and sinners were Jews: for with none other, but by way of exception, did the Messiah familiarly converse in the

days of his flesh : being "not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Matt. xv. 24.

It has been well said, that we have not here the mystery of the calling of the Gentiles, but the blessed truth that within the covenant (with Israel) Jesus was come to call and receive sinners to repentance. No Gentiles were brought within the new covenant till some time after His ascension. Acts, x.

The Father in the parable represents Jehovah—the pre-existing Messiah—the God of Israel.

The elder son represents the Scribes and Pharisees to whom it was addressed : the younger son points out the class of publicans and sinners received back by divine love in a way quite above law.

The elder son represents the legally righteous Scribes and Pharisees, who murmured against grace, or free forgiveness of sin—namely, those Jews who could truly aver, "Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandments ;"—for the father replying, "Son, thou art ever with me," acknowledges their obedience. They would go into the kingdom of heaven by their own works, instead of believing on Jesus as the Christ, the promised Messiah, Israel's righteousness. Rom. x. 3.
Jer. xxiii. 5-8 ; xxxiii. 16.

At the Redeemer's first advent, the feast was ready as represented in the parable of the marriage supper ; but the elder son, like the invited guests, would not go in. The father (the Logos incarnated) came forth to persuade him, but he was angry at the free grace shown to sinners (the publicans and harlots), and refused ; so the feast waits—the kingdom cannot be manifested till the Jewish nation repents, and is changed in heart and mind. In the mean time elect Jews and Gentiles are gathering out into the Church above. Matt. xxii. 2-14.
Luke, xiv. 15-24.
2 Cor. iii. 15, 16.
Acts, iii. 19-21.

“The elder brother represents a low but not false form of legal righteousness. He is one who has been kept by the law from gross offences; he has been occupied, though in a servile spirit, in the works of the law. For so, no doubt, had it been with not a few of the Pharisees. Many were hypocrites; but also many of them sincerely, but in much blindness of heart, were followers of righteousness. Of this class may have been the murmurers here; persons not to be rejected, nor the good in them to be denied, but needing to be invited to renounce their servile for a filial spirit. In this sense we must understand the father’s invitation to the elder son to come in. Hitherto he had been labouring in the field, but now he is invited to a festival. They whose work for God had hitherto been servile taskwork of the law, are invited to enter into the joy of their Lord.”

Rom. x. 1,
2.

Matt. xx.
1-6.

Verses twenty-nine and thirty show plainly that he whom the elder son represents was looking for certain definite rewards of his obedience.

With all his guilt the prodigal was not a citizen of that far (Gentile) land, but a Jew. The thought of his father’s grace never once entered into his mind. When he set out on his return, he only reckoned on being received as a hired servant—viz., a legal one, like the labourers in the vineyard.

To feed swine was exceeding vile and degrading in the estimation of a Jew; so that misery would seem to have come upon the prodigal “to the uttermost,” like what has befallen his nation since.

1 Thess. ii.
15, 16.

Isa. lxi. 6;
lxii. 12;
Isa. lxvi.
22.

The father in act plainly declared that he meant to restore to him a place and name in his house again; for it is acknowledged that a kiss in eastern countries means not only reconciliation, but restoration to former position: also that “robe, ring, shoes,”

are ornaments—not of the slave, but of the free: all, therefore, speaking of dignity and restoration to former privileges. The ring, too, is the pledge of betrothal. In all this we see a plain prediction of Jehovah's intended reunion with the Jewish nation, when he restores to His covenant people the light of His countenance, with possession of their own land; which, indeed, is certain, from Peter's sermon to the Jews at Pentecost, "Repent ye, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, which was before preached unto you; whom the heaven must receive" (retain) "until the time of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began."

Hos. ii. 19,
20.

Isa. liv. 1-
8; Ps. xlv.

Acts, iii.
19, 20.

Legality is promoted in the Church now by taking texts for Gospel sermons from the Jewish Gospels of the kingdom. The reason is plain, for Moses' law was in force during the Messiah's offer of the kingdom to the Jews: it was not changed even to Christianised Hebrews till Paul's time; and never was abolished.

Heb. vii.
12.

Very dangerous false doctrine has arisen from not seeing that the Gospels are Jewish in their teaching: for example, the words, "I will arise and go to my father," "the Pelagians of old adduced in proof that man could turn to God in his own strength; . . . just as Unitarians now find in the circumstances of the prodigal's return a proof that the sinner's repentance alone is sufficient to reconcile him with his God, and that without a mediator or a sacrifice." It was only in virtue of the all-atoning sacrifice that Jesus had engaged to offer, that the Father could accept any repentance or any service of any kind

under the Mosaic covenant ; and such errors as those just quoted could never have arisen had the Bible been studied as a whole, and its different dispensations been understood.—See Heb. x. 19-22.

THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT.

MATT. XVIII. 23-35.

23. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.

24. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents :

25. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

26. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

27. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

28. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him an hundred pence ; and he laid hands on him, and took *him* by the throat, saying, pay me that thou owest.

29. And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

30. And he would not ; but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

31. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

32. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me :

33. Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee ?

34. And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

35. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

Though this parable conveys a lesson to all men who hear or read it, to forgive as they hope to be forgiven, yet it is right to observe how specially it bears upon the Jews in general, and the disciples of Jesus in particular, to whom He gave very special powers, and promises with regard to answering their petitions.

In the immediately preceding context, Peter asked his Lord how often he should forgive his brother sinner ; until seven times ? The Lord replied, not until seven times, but until seventy times seven ; and then He spake this parable to enforce the duty of forgiveness, for He also, like the "certain king," will after long absence take account of His servants, and reckon with them.

Matt. xxv.
14-30.

Jesus here declares the principle by which He will judge, and by which those who are to go into His "kingdom of heaven" should live whilst they are in this world ; and shows by His own full, free forgiveness of His disciples' sins, how fully and unceasingly they should forgive one another, charging them elsewhere to forgive, otherwise their Father which is in heaven will not forgive their trespasses.

Mark. xi.
25, 26.

The words in the 35th verse, "So, likewise, shall my heavenly Father do also unto you," proves the Lord teaches here from the example of a certain despotic king, who had (as was then common in eastern countries) power not only over his servants or slaves, but over all that they possessed. This king having pardoned one man who owed him 10,000 talents, which in silver amounted to nearly two millions, his wrath was kindled against him for immediately insisting upon his fellow-servant paying to him, without any delay, the small sum of not more than three pounds of our money. Without the least remembrance of the king's mercy to himself, he cast his debtor into "prison" till he should pay all he owed. So the king, in conformity with a just law, well known to the Jews, "with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again," delivered the unmerciful servant "to the tormentors till he should pay all that was due unto him."

Matt. vii.
2, 12.

This has been misunderstood and misused, therefore it requires some explanation. In the first place, there is no reference whatever either to hades or hell, but simply to a prison of which the jailors are called "tormentors." They obtained this designation by sometimes being obliged to apply to prisoners instruments of torture to compel payment or submission to authority. In the second place, no argument is to be drawn from this parable for the Roman Catholic's profitable but false doctrine of purgatory—profitable, for by it they extort money from the superstitious and the ignorant.

The way by which the unmerciful man's debt to the king was to be paid is pointed out in the 25th verse,—he should be sold, with his wife, and his children, and all that he had ; but how unforgiving and unforgiven Jews are to be punished we are not here told : the apostles, for whose instruction the parable was spoken, not being likely to commit the sin forbidden. One of them was afterwards inspired to write to the twelve tribes scattered abroad, "He shall have judgment without mercy that hath showed no mercy : and mercy rejoiceth against judgment."

James, ii.
13.

The prayer which Jesus taught to His Jewish disciples exactly accords with this parable : "forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," is a petition which Christians, according to the election of grace, must always mentally qualify ; knowing by the spirit how imperfect is their every fulfilment of duty, and that by no act of theirs can they ever merit forgiveness. But being washed by faith in the blood of God's dear Son, saints of the heavenly calling are freely forgiven, and already under the new covenant they will not be judged or dealt with according to their works—"for according to His great mercy He

Matt. vi.
12.

Titus, iii. 5.

THE LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD. 45

hath saved them : ” and being one with Christ, as He is one with God, “all things are theirs.” Paul’s testimony concerning the saints is, “Know ye not that we shall judge angels? but them that are without, God judgeth.”

1 Cor. iii.
22, 23.
John, xvii.
11.
1 Cor. vi.
2, 3.
1 Cor. v.
12, 13.
Heb. xiii.
4.

It has been pointed out that the parable of the unmerciful servant has been employed by Socinus against the doctrine of the Atonement, inasmuch as the king pardoning his servant merely upon his petition, and not on account of any satisfaction made or any mediator intervening, shows that God will pardon His debtors on the ground of their prayers, without requiring any sacrifice or intercessor.

Could this grave error ever have arisen if the differences in dispensations had been understood, and if it had been seen how progressive have been all the revelations of God? We believe Socinianism cannot be maintained when it becomes known how long it was before the way into the holiest by the blood of Jesus was explained—first, by the fact of His crucifixion; and next, by the inspired explanations of the types by the apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews: also, when it is perceived that salvation through Christ alone has been provided for in every case in the everlasting covenant made between the Father and the Son before the world was.

THE LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD.

MATT. XX. 1-16.

1. For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *that is* an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

2. And when he had agreed with

the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

3. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market-place,

4. And said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.

5. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.

6. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?

7. They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, *that* shall ye receive.

8. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them *their* hire, beginning from the last unto the first.

9. And when they came that

were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

10. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.

11. And when they had received *it*, they murmured against the goodman of the house,

12. Saying, These last have wrought *but* one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

13. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst thou not agree with me for a penny?

14. Take *that* thine *is*, and go thy way: I will give unto this last even as unto thee.

15. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?

16. So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

This Vineyard is so generally supposed to mean the present visible Church, that that Church is consequently taken to be "the kingdom of heaven."

"The kingdom of heaven" will be so very different, we shall here give a short description of it before explaining this parable.

The Redeemer's kingdom will consist of two spheres, heavenly and earthly, united together.

1st, Heavenly, for the Church of the elect, who will dwell in the holy city, new Jerusalem, the place now preparing for the saints, "which cometh down out of heaven from God," to be suspended eternally in the new heavens. "There will be the throne of the Redeemer;" and his bride, "in the midst of the throne," will reign with Him for ever. Then heaven will be God's throne, and earth His footstool.

2d, "The kingdom of heaven," or regenerated

Eph. i. 10;
Isa. lxxv. 17;
2 Pet. iii.
13; Rev.
xxi. 1.

Rev. xxi.
2, 10;
John, xiv.

2, 3.
2 Cor. v. 1,
2.

Rev. xxii.
3, 5.
Rev. iv. 6.
Isa. lxxvi. 1.

world below, the abode of redeemed nations, all blessed with the knowledge of Jehovah-Jesus,—especially Israel, in earth's new Jerusalem, to be called Hepzibah—"the Lord is there"—rejoicing and shining in the light of the heavenly city above.

Isa. lxii. 4.
Ezek. xlviii.
35.
Isa. lx. 1,
19, 20;
Rev. xxi.
22-24.

It is from this world, which is to become His kingdom, that the Lord gathers out His elect Church (or bride) till He comes. He began this work early—viz., from "the beginning,"—at the death of Abel, calling some soon, some late, in different dispensations, as He pleased; for He had a right to do what He will with His own.

This parable is obviously meant to teach the Lord's sovereignty and justice, and to explain particularly the 16th verse, which runs thus: "So the last shall be first, and the first last; for many be called, but few chosen."

Matt. xxii.
14.
Luke, xiii.
30.
Matt. xiii.
24.
Isa. v. 1-7.

The vineyard is the land of Israel—"the field" where the Lord planted the choicest vine.

The householder is Jehovah, who has committed all judgment unto Messiah, the Son, to pay or reward all His labourers according to His word of promise.

The labourers were all Jews, who worked for stipulated reward, according to Jehovah's covenant with Israel.

The first were the legally righteous and obedient, who had served long, by covenant agreement, for a penny a-day. They claimed and received that sum because of their works, having dutifully borne the burden and heat of the day.

When the fulness of time was come for the Messiah to visit His vineyard, He found other Jews standing idle outside. These He commanded to go into it, and labour till the time of payment; when the owner of

the vineyard having rewarded them * as much as the first, they murmured against his free grace, like the elder son in the parable of the prodigal.

The last, therefore, means the publicans and harlots, who, by believing in Jesus as the Messiah, and obeying His call to repentance, obtained a title to reward in the kingdom, redeemed, as it were, in the last hour; and, paid even as the first, they went into it before the legally righteous Scribes and Pharisees, thus fulfilling the oft-repeated saying, "So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many are called, but few chosen."

Ver. 16.

The termination of the 16th verse is an application to the apostles they would easily understand, they being the "few chosen," in comparison with the many blinded Jews who heard and saw, and yet believed not,—who were called, but not chosen.

Matt. xxi.
28-31.

Matt. xix.
27-30.

The special application of these words to the apostles cannot be rightly understood without reference to the last four verses of the 19th chapter. They were spoken in consequence of Peter's question, "Behold, we" (the apostles) "have forsaken all, and followed thee: what shall we have therefore?" Peter's question put the apostles' relation to their Lord on the footing of so much work so much reward; but Jesus immediately vindicated His right to give to all His servants as He pleased, by speaking this parable, though he delayed not to declare how He would give to the apostles beyond all their desires and expectations: "I grant unto you (as my Father hath granted unto me) a kingdom, that ye should eat and drink at my table in my kingdom,

Luke, xxii.
29, 30.

* We may remark that the Lord spoke here, as He always did, as if He would return to the generation He addressed—as if the time of judgment and reward was come or near at hand. This proves that the kingdom is as future as the judgment.

and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." All labourers in the vineyard are to be admitted into the kingdom—at least, they possess a title to a portion there when it appears: and those who were so peculiarly chosen, called, and ordained by the Lord, as were the apostles, are to reign with Him then over the whole redeemed house of Israel.

John, xv.
11.

Some spiritually minded Christians cannot believe there ever were any legally righteous; but Luke, i. 6 proves that there were, at the time of the first advent, legally righteous, "just persons," walking before God in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord "blameless," "waiting for the consolation of Israel." And more than this, Mal. iii. 4 shows that the observances of the law used to be "pleasant" to Jehovah, even as will be those of the new law and covenant, to be given unto Israel when the Jewish theocracy is restored, and free forgiveness of national sins is bestowed upon that chosen race, whose "blood" and land are "not yet cleansed."

Luke, ii.
25.

A great mistake has been made in supposing that the Lord's declaration that "the last shall be first and the first last" has been fulfilled in the call of the Gentiles, misunderstanding Luke, xiii. 23-30; for that passage of Scripture relates entirely to the gathering in of the Jews and scattered ten tribes from every quarter at the second coming of the Messiah. The Jews who refused the Lord's personal invitation will then weep and lament, pleading in vain that He taught in their streets,—which shows the whole subject is Jewish.

Rom. xi.
27.
Matt. xxvii.
25.
Ezek. xxii.
24; Joel,
iii. 21;
Zech. xiii.
1; Jer. l.
20.

In this and other parables there are insurmountable difficulties as long as they are applied to the Gentiles now; but these difficulties disappear when

the parables are applied to the Jews in the days of the Messiah.

THE BARREN FIG-TREE.

MATT. XXI. 17-22.

17. And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and he lodged there.

18. Now in the morning, as he returned into the city, he hungered.

19. And when he saw a fig-tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig-tree withered away.

20. And when the disciples saw

it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!

21. Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this *which is done* to the fig-tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.

22. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

COMPARE WITH MARK, XI. 12-14, AND LUKE, XIII. 1-9.

Ver. 15.

It was after "the chief priests and elders" had been sore displeased at the reception of Jesus by many Jews when He rode into Jerusalem, that He spoke this parable against the unbelieving nation and its rulers who wanted to kill Him, warning them that if they repented not (at the coming of the Holy Ghost), they should "all likewise perish," as did those men upon whom the tower of Siloam fell.

John, v. 16,
18.

Jehovah planted the Jewish nation, as a fig-tree, in Israel's land, His vineyard; but it was "empty" or "barren" of fruit.

Joel, i. 7;
Isa. v. 1-7.
Hos. x. 1.

For three years consecutively, He, in the person of His Son, sought for fruit among His chosen people. The Jews, as compared with other nations, were full of light, knowledge, privileges, and high profession; but as a nation they produced "leaves"

only, and had no fruits of faith in their Messiah. John, i. 11. Jehovah therefore commanded that the emblematic fig-tree should be cut down as a cumberer of the ground. But the Jews' gracious Redeemer, in this time of "merciful visitation," interceded that space for repentance might yet be given, in which, by His Holy Spirit outpoured, the tree might be made fruitful; if not, He would consent to its being destroyed.

"The time of figs was not yet," inasmuch as the first advent was not the time for gathering the Jewish nation as a whole; only the elect were then effectually called, even as Jesus is now gathering out the elect from among the Gentiles into His Church above. Heb. xii. 22, 23.

In judgment the Lord remembers mercy; so though the whole nation withered away and disappeared altogether out of sight (Titus and the Romans being commissioned to cut down the tree), yet there remains such life in the root, that when replanted in the vineyard, as it will be hereafter by the Lord, "He shall cause them that come of Jacob" (the godly remnant) "to take root downward and bear fruit upward:" "Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the" (regenerated) "world with fruit." Matt. xxii. 7. Isa. vi. 13. Isa. lx. 21, 22. Isa. xxxvii. 31. Isa. xxvii. 6.

It should be observed that the sentence of the fig-tree's barrenness extends to the entire duration of this world; but its fruitfulness in the next is made apparent in the parable of the vineyard, where it is remarkable that the way by which the vineyard is taken away from the wicked husbandmen is as completely passed over in silence, as the way by which "their place and nation" were taken away from the Jews in this parable, symbolising the sudden blasting of the fig-tree. Matt. xxi. 41-43.

These scriptures may therefore be numbered with

the many others which prove the New Testament gap—viz., its silence during the dispersion of the Jews. The complete rooting out of the barren fig-tree, and of the wicked husbandmen from the Lord's vineyard, will be when the Lord returns to it: all the Romans did being of such minor importance, neither they nor the dispersion they occasioned are alluded to in either of these parables.

The contexts in Matthew and Mark tell us how surprised were all the disciples at the speedy withering of the fig-tree. Jesus made a very special application to His apostles when He said to Peter, "Have faith in God," meaning, for as surely as ye have seen my words come true quickly with regard to the fig-tree, so surely shall all my promises to you of miraculous help in the performance of your special mission be quickly realised. What things soever they asked believingly they should receive. To make this most important point plain, the Redeemer afterwards found fault with His disciples for not having asked as they ought, saying, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." We all know what different men they became after Pentecost, and the wonders they then performed through the power of Jesus' name.

Mark, xvi.
16-18.
Acts, i. 8;
Matt.
xxviii. 19,
20.

John, xvi.
24.

We believe that Scripture, explained in its grammatical and primary sense, would meet the arguments of rationalists against prayer and other things as nothing else can. And we do not see why special application of this parable to the Jews, nationally, should forbid or prevent any individual, with reproving conscience, from esteeming himself no better than a barren fig-tree, deserving to be cut down as a cumberer of the ground.

When Christians get the true meaning of God's Word, they must be gainers, not losers, as some people fear.

THE TWO SONS.

MATT. XXI. 28-32.

28. But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard.

29. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.

30. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir; and went not.

31. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say

unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.

32. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen *it*, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

The "certain man" is Jehovah-Jesus.

The two sons are two classes of His Jewish people who were called to work in His vineyard, the land of Israel. Both classes are called sons, because all Jews were in covenant relation to God, whether obedient or disobedient.

The first son who refused, when told to work, represents the publicans and harlots, who afterwards repented and obeyed.

The second son promised well; but disobeying, went not at all into the vineyard. He represents the chief priests and Pharisees, outwardly fair, but like unto sepulchres within, and so unbelieving that they questioned the authority of Jesus, and ultimately sought to destroy Him. They belonged to that class of Scribes and Pharisees whom the Lord called hypocrites, sitting in Moses' seat, binding heavy burdens

Ver. 23-27.
Matt. xxiii.
27.

Ver. 45.

on men's shoulders, grievous to be borne, but they themselves would not move them with one of their fingers ; blind guides, who would neither go into the kingdom nor suffer other Jews to go in (these all being the multitude then going the broad way to destruction) ; Scribes and Pharisees, whose works were so wicked, that their condemnation is summed up by their righteous Judge in these words, " Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell ? "

Matt. vii.
13.

Matt. xxiii.
33.

Men then possessed as much freewill as they do now, and certainly these wicked Jews are censured in the 32d verse for not having repented as did the publicans and sinners, after they heard the preaching of John the Baptist, saying, " Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Matt. iii. 2.

But all Pharisees were not under this condemnation, because it is recorded that when John saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, " O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come ? Bring forth fruits meet for repentance," as the first son did by going to work in the vineyard, and as the prodigal did when he repented and returned to his father.

Luke, xv.
18.

In many copies, and some not unimportant ones, it is the son that is first spoken to who promises to go, and afterwards disobeys ; and the second who, refusing first, afterwards changes his mind, and enters on the work. Probably the order was thus reversed by transcribers, who thought that the application of the parable must be to the successive callings of the Jews and Gentiles, and that therefore the order of their calling should be preserved. But the parable does not primarily apply to the Jew and Gentile, but

must be referred rather to the two bodies within the bosom of the Jewish people: it is not said "the Gentiles," but "the publicans and harlots enter into the kingdom of heaven before you."—(Trench.)

THE VINEYARD;
OR, THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN.

MATT. XXI. 33-45.

33. Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country:

34. And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it.

35. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.

36. Again, he sent other servants more than the first; and they did unto them likewise.

37. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, they will reverence my son.

38. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.

39. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.

40. When the lord therefore of

the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?

41. They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

42. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

43. Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

44. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

45. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.

COMPARE WITH MARK, XII. 1-12, AND LUKE, XX. 9-17.

This parable was spoken by Jesus to the chief priests, scribes, and elders who sought to lay hands Ver. 46. on Him.

The Lord Jehovah is the householder; the husbandmen are the wicked unbelieving Jews; and the messengers and servants are the Lord's Old Testament prophets.

The vineyard is the land of Canaan, where a long time ago Jehovah planted Israel as the choicest vine, and fenced it in as described in Isa. v. 1-7. There Jehovah reigned over Israel; but His ungrateful people soon desired to have a human king like the surrounding heathen nations: the Lord in judgment gave them Saul, and withdrew Himself to His holy habitation afar off; no longer exercising direct theocratic government, but holding communication with the rebellious Israelites by means of His messengers and prophets. These they maltreated, and some of them they killed: in process of time they even crucified the Heir of the vineyard, their Messiah; for which national sin, and for also blaspheming the Holy Ghost, the Lord sent Titus and the Romans to take away "their place and nation," to break down the hedge, and root the vine altogether out of the land.

This well known historical event we look for in vain in this parable, the purpose of which is to foretell the total destruction of the wicked husbandmen and the ultimate fertility of the vineyard. The parable therefore hurries on to the end of this present interim period, to the time when "He shall come"—viz., the Lord shall come again in power and great glory to the vineyard, when He will do exactly what these chief priests and Pharisees acknowledged should be done in the case supposed. He will then find the nation partially restored to the land, under the rule of the anti-Messiah, and seven times worse than before. He will miserably destroy all these wicked

Acts, ii. 23.

Acts, iii. 15.

Matt. xxiv.

30.

Zech. xiv.

4, 5.

Ps. x. 16.

men* out of His land, who are described as anti-christian thorns and briers, which Messiah is "to burn and go through" at His second advent, till neither root nor branch shall remain. As the stone of Israel, He shall dash in pieces all kingdoms symbolised in Dan. ii. 44-45, who will then be resuscitated and leagued with the wicked husbandmen of those days: He will grind to powder all who oppose the setting up of His glorious visible kingdom, which shall have no end: and then shall the rescued godly Jewish remnant believingly exclaim, "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner: this is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." It is the day of Israel's salvation.

Isa. xxvii.
4; xxxiii.
12.

Mal. iv. 1.
Gen. xlix.
24.

Isa. ix. 7;
Luke, i. 33.

Ps. cxviii.
22-24.

Ps. xiv. 7;
Isa. xii. 1-6.

The blessed remnant of Jews are the "other husbandmen" to whom the Lord will then let out His vineyard, where, according to Jehovah's unconditional promise to Abraham, His seed shall take root and bring forth the fruits thereof: they shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.

Gen. xii. 7;
xv. 18-21.
Isa. xxvii.
6.

Ps. xxxvii.
11, 29.
Matt. v. 5.

In the mean time, the vineyard which is to become the Messiah's kingdom has been lying desolate in the possession of Romans, Turks, and all sorts of infidels and heretics; therefore, under gentle culture, it is bringing forth no good fruit, and the prophecy must be awaiting the future great and notable day of the Lord, when He shall thoroughly purge His floor and gather His wheat into the garner.

Mal. iv. 5;
Acts, ii. 20.
Matt. iii.
12.

The time when all this is to be done is plainly declared in the parable in these words, "When the

Ver. 40.

* It should here be observed how plainly all the successive generations who filled up the measure of Israel's iniquity, and the wicked unbelievers who are yet to come, are ever spoken of as one generation or nation.

Matt. xxiii.
32.

lord of the vineyard cometh." Titus was not "the lord of the vineyard;" yet, notwithstanding the whole three evangelists say, "He" (the Lord) "shall come," commentators unacquainted with the New Testament's silence concerning this dispensation are of opinion that the prophecy was providentially fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus and the Romans: but the coming of Titus is not the second coming of the Messiah—and that He alone is meant we have proof of in the reference and quotation made from the highly Messianic 118th Psalm.

Sending the written Word among the Gentiles, to take out from among them a people for the Redeemer's name, is not the giving of the vineyard to them, though such teaching has been generally accepted. The Gospel is one thing and the vineyard is another—so very different, that it is not the Church, nor "the gospel of the grace of God," nor even "the gospel of the kingdom," but "the kingdom of God" itself: for is it not said in the 43d verse, "Therefore I say unto you" (the wicked husbandmen), "the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof"?—namely, the remnants of Judah and Israel, who shall then be gathered into their land, and be united as one "nation" under one king for ever.

Ezek.
xxxvii. 22.

In this parable, as in innumerable other passages of Scripture, the two advents of the Lord are spoken of as if close together, without any intervening event being mentioned; consequently, there cannot be anything about the Gentiles in it. Some people imagine Gentiles may be intended by the "nation" or the "others" to whom the vineyard is to be given, pointing out how different is their moral character from the murderers they are to supersede. It is true

they are to be "all righteous," but these "other husbandmen" are also to be all Jews: and the promise to them is, "in that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth" (or vineyard) "shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel." Her that was cast off the Lord will make "a strong nation," and He shall reign over them from thenceforth, even for ever.

Isa. lx. 21.

Isa. iv. 2.

Amos, ix.

14, 15.

Micah, iv.

7.

THE MARRIAGE SUPPER; OR, THE WEDDING GARMENT.

MATT. XXII. 2-14.

2. The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,

3. And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.

4. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings *are* killed, and all things *are* ready: come unto the marriage.

5. But they made light of *it*, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:

6. And the remnant took his servants, and entreated *them* spitefully, and slew *them*.

7. But when the king heard *thereof*, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

8. Then saith he to his servants,

The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.

9. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

10. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

11. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:

12. And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

13. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

14. For many are called, but few *are* chosen.

A parable somewhat like this is found in Luke's Gospel; but it was spoken at a prior time, in a dif-

Luke, xiv.
16.

ferent place, and with partially a different object in view.

Jesus taught this parable in the Temple to the chief priests, Pharisees, and elders censured in the preceding parables of the two sons, and the vineyard or the wicked husbandmen—for when “the chief priests and Pharisees had heard His parables, they perceived that He spake of them.” Their hostility had by this time reached the point of desiring to kill Jesus. They were, as rulers and representatives of the Jewish people generally, on the eve of rejecting the counsel of God, and sealing themselves up as a nation to wrath to the uttermost or to the end.

Matt. xxi.
23, 45, 46.

2 Thess. ii.
15, 16.

Matt. v. 17,
18.

John, xi.
50-52.

Gal. iv. 5.

The Lord came, not to destroy the law but to fulfil it, and to make it honourable. He died under that law primarily for the Jewish nation, to redeem them that were under the law. In a life of thirty-three years' duration He kept its every precept and enactment without sin or the smallest transgression, which no other man did or could have done. This perfect legal righteousness He wrought out for His people, and of His own free grace and unmerited favour He imputed it to such as believed in Him as their Messiah; but the nation's wicked rulers and all the Christ-rejecting Jews would not go into the kingdom on the humiliating terms that the publicans and sinners gladly accepted—viz., free forgiveness of sins and the imputed righteousness of Israel's merciful Redeemer, of whom it is written, “In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.”

Isa. xlv. 25.

This preliminary observation is needful to the right understanding of the latter part of this parable; and another remark should be made here to prevent misconception with regard to the supper.

At the establishment of the kingdom of God there

are to be two marriage suppers of the king's son ; one in heaven for the bride, the Lamb's wife, who will then have made herself "ready," and will be complete in number: and the other on the earth, which is the marriage supper here, to which the Jews were invited to come, but would not: so the manifestation of the kingdom, and the festival of rejoicing, have not really yet taken place.

Rev. xix.
6-9.

Isa. xxv. 6,
7.

The narrative here begins with the Messiah's first advent, at which "due time," had the Jews received Him as their king, he would have taken Israel, the divorced wife, into reunion with Himself; and then "their peace would have been as a river, and their righteousness as the waves of the sea." But they knew not the day of their merciful visitation, nor the things belonging to their peace.

Isa. l. 1 ;
Jer. iii. 14,
20.
Isa. lv. 5, 6.
Isa. xlviii.
18.
Isa. lxvi.
12.
Luke, xix.
42-44.

The servants commissioned to invite the Jews to the marriage were, first, the twelve disciples; and then the seventy, who were all charged not to go into the way of the Gentiles, but to the house of Israel only. But the Jews refused to come. They had previously disregarded John the Baptist's call to national repentance, because "the kingdom of God was nigh at hand:" and having no spiritual understanding of the types in their Mosaic law and temple worship, they knew not the meaning of the Baptist's words, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." They slew John in the prison; they actually killed the King's Son, and then His servants (the apostles) who succeeded Him: and thus they brought upon themselves the destruction of their city and nation by the Romans, who were the armies of the king which He in his wrath sent forth; for earthly powers are God's sword.

Matt. x. 5-
7.
Luke, x. 1.

Matt. iii. 2.

John, i. 29.

Matt. xiv.
10.

Ps. xvii. 13.

Here we have a recognition of an important event, passed over without mention in former parables.

The destruction of these murderers soon came; but the king's mercy was not exhausted, nor his purpose concerning the supper altered: only some of the guests should be changed. Whilst the supper on earth is delayed, other guests were gathered by the preaching of the apostles "in the highways," including both "bad and good," meaning unclean and clean, Gentile and Jew. This was done by "the gospel of the kingdom," during the time God's mercy lingered over Jerusalem, before "the gospel of the grace of God," without the deeds of the law, was revealed to Paul, and before the destruction of the city by Titus. So the 10th verse stretches on to the end, and represents the table as fully furnished with guests; the time of the dispersion being as usual overpassed.

Acts, xx.

24.

Gal. ii. 2.

Matt. xxiv.

14.

Jehovah (the king), in the person of His Son, to whom all judgment is committed, seeing a man (representing all the murderous chief priests, Pharisees, and elders, for whose warning and benefit this parable was spoken) unclothed with the wedding garment of the Lord's justifying righteousness which He had provided for all the guests, convicts him of having so neglected and despised it, that he is self-condemned and speechless, knowing there is no way of escape from the just retribution named.

This representative man belongs to a class so numerous at the time the Lord spoke this parable, that He added, "For many are called, but few chosen:" a saying that should not be extended beyond the dispensation to which it is attached, because other parts of Scripture show how extensive the benefits of Christ's death and resurrection have been, and will continue to be till He comes again.

When the Jews were scattered by the sword of Titus, the Lord turned his hand "upon the little ones," for thus are high-minded Gentiles named, and as such they are viewed by God in comparison with His covenant people Israel, whom He calls His "peculiar treasure." And though the Gentiles are yet no more than the wild olive branch grafted into the Jewish fat olive tree, the work of salvation is so very great, that besides all that has been going on by the Holy Spirit's influence by the written Word for the last eighteen hundred years, the inspired word of prophecy assures us that in the great tribulation of the "perilous last days," there will be gathered out "a multitude which no man could number, from all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues:" all possessed of "the righteousness of God," the wedding garment of which "white raiment" is the emblem. The difference between "the righteousness of Christ" and "the righteousness of God" should be attentively considered: they are both imputed, but the one is legal, the other divine; the first for the Jewish nation, the last for the Lord's body, the Church, even a participation of the divine nature of Him who is both God and man; all freely bestowed on those who are to reign with Him in heavenly glory over the redeemed house of Israel, then to be rejoicing in Jehovah as "the Lord their righteousness."

Zech. xiii.
7.
Cant. viii.
8.

Ps. cxxxv.
4

2 Tim. iii.
1.
Rev. vii. 9,
14.
Rev. iii. 5;
iv. 4; xix.
8, 14.

Rom. iii.
22, 28.

2 Pet. i. 4.

Jer. xxiii.
6; xxxiii.
16.

THE FIG-TREE.

MATT. xxiv. 32-35.

32. Now learn a parable of the tender, and putteth forth leaves,
fig-tree: When his branch is yet ye know that summer is nigh:

33. So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, *even* at the doors. generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

34. Verily I say unto you, This away, but my words shall not pass away. 35. Heaven and earth shall pass away.

COMPARE WITH MARK, XIII. 23-31, AND LUKE, XXI. 28-31.

Matt. xxii.
19.
Joel, i. 7.

We have already seen that the fig-tree is an emblem of the Jewish nation; and in a former part of Matt. 24, we have been made acquainted with the "signs" of which the Lord said to Jewish believers, "When ye see these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh."

A previous sign to the world in general will be the partial regathering of the Jews into Palestine, for when they are again counted among the nations, those who live then may be very sure that the beginning of "the end" is nigh, even at the doors. The Jews must preoccupy the land long enough to rebuild their city and temple, and to make a seven years' covenant with the Antichrist before the events of "the day of the Lord," in its extended sense, can begin.

Just as buds in spring betoken the near approach of summer, so will the events predicted in Matthew 24, Mark, 13, and Luke, 21, betoken the Messiah's speedy second advent to the Jews in Judea. In these chapters He replies to His disciples' questions, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the age?"

He spoke to the disciples as the representatives of the nation. "Few things are more essential to an intelligent apprehension of much that the four Gospels contain, than to perceive the remnant character of our Lord's disciples. They were the remnant in their day. Doubtless there were higher destinies awaiting them, when once the national rejection of

their Lord had been consummated: no doubt those who had been till then simply Christ's disciples, and as such the godly Jewish remnant of their day, did become 'of the Church of the living God,' into which Gentiles were afterwards introduced, both becoming one body in Christ. But while this was the place of privilege and dignity in reserve for the disciples, and while a portion of our Lord's instructions were addressed to them, prospectively having in the counsels of God to fill this place, they were actually (until the rejection of the Holy Ghost) the remnant of Israel, and were in this character addressed and instructed by the Lord." It is so here; for in no part of Scripture can we find a plainer proof that the Lord addressed the Jews always, not only as one race of people, but as one generation of that people, than in the 34th verse of this chapter,—“Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.”

Stier, the most learned and evangelical of all the German critics of the present day, asserts that beyond doubt the generation that is to outlive all these things is the Jewish race.

Dean Alford thinks it is beyond critical dispute that Matt. xxiv. 34 means “the Jewish race, and in no degree the arbitrary interpretation of a race of thirty or forty years, as held by some unripe scholars.”

Other commentators deny that the Greek word used for “generation” ever means “a race of people.” To such and to all it is important to bear in mind that this and many similar difficulties are removed when we see that the present dispensation, whilst the Jews are dispersed, is indeed, as it were, a parenthesis seldom or ever alluded to in Scripture; and

that the Jewish people of the Messiah's days on earth, and those of "the last days," are consistently spoken of as one generation.

It should be remembered that the Messiah is here giving a direct answer to His disciples' questions, Luke, xxi. 7. "When shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things come to pass?"—namely, the destruction of the temple, and the coming of the Son of Man in power and great glory at the end of the age. We shall see at once His perfect silence concerning the wandering time of the Jews, and that what He says about the temple, though primarily fulfilled by the Romans, will be so specially repeated by the antichristians of the "last days," Isa. xxix. 3. that, more literally still than now, "there shall not be left one stone upon another." Of course this implies a previous restoration of the temple and of the Jews, whose partial return to their own land is a matter of certainty; for how else could the Messiah come to Zion? or in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem should there be deliverance for the remnant whom Isa. lix. 20. Joel, ii. 31, 32. the Lord shall call in that great and notable day, when "the sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood"? Surely there has not been such a day as this yet!

Ezek. xxii. 19-22. Prophecy teaches that the Jews are to be re-gathered into Jerusalem, to undergo the seven last Lev. xxvi. 18, 21, 28; vials of God's wrath, due to their national sins—a Rev. xv. 1. planting which is to result in "a harvest of desperate sorrow." Isa. xvii. 11. They will then earnestly desire "to see one of the days of the Son of man, and shall not see it." Luke, xvii. 22. The remnant alone, who trust in Jehovah, will Hab. iii. 17-19. be saved.

The Lord's first disciples, John only excepted, suffered death in the discharge of duty; but here,

be it observed, to the believers in the last days it is said, "not a hair of their heads shall perish;" and "when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh."

Luke, xxi.
18, 28, 36.

Many commentators are of opinion that Luke, xxi. does not predict the events of "the last days" until the 24th verse; but as "the times of the Gentiles" will not be fulfilled till the forty-two months of the anti-Messiah's reign in Jerusalem is ended, the 24th verse must necessarily relate to his captivity of the Jews in the last days, when he breaks his covenant with them in the middle of the seventieth week (of years), and takes their city, after which he will usurp the Lord's throne till He comes to destroy him with the brightness of His coming, to give deliverance both to His Church and the persecuted Jewish remnant.

Rev. xi. 2;
xiii. 5.

Dan. ix.
24, 27.
Zech. xiv.
2; Ezek.
xxi. 25-27.
2 Thess. ii.
8.
2 Thess. i.
6, 7;
1 Thess. iv.
16, 17.
Dan. xii. 1.

The sign preceding this deliverance will be something gloriously bright, well seen from the prevailing literal darkness.

This sign will cause penitent mourning among the Jews whom the Lord designs to save and leave upon the earth; but when the Messiah appears their mourning will be turned into joy; and then their persecutors and antichristian brethren will be cut off, calling upon the mountains and the rocks to cover them from the presence of the Lord, and from the wrath of the Lamb.

Matt. xxiv.
29, 30.
Zech. xii.
10-14.
Joel. ii. 32.
Matt. v. 3-5.
John, xvi.
20; Isa.
xxv. 9; lxx.
5.

The special lesson inculcated in this parable is, to watch observantly for the signs of the Messiah's second advent.

Ps. xxxvii.
34, 36.
Rev. i. 7;
Isa. ii. 19,
21.
Rev. vi. 15,
17.

From the 35th verse, which says that heaven and earth shall then pass away, we should learn that the new heavens and the new earth, first promised to

Isa. lxxv. 17. the Jewish nation at the regeneration, leaves no room
 2 Pet. iii. 13. for a millennium, which is nowhere to be found in
 Scripture, and especially not in the twentieth chapter
 of Revelation.

WATCHING FOR THE THIEF.

MATT. XXIV. 42-44.

42. Watch therefore : 'for ye come, he would have watched, and
 know not what hour your Lord would not have suffered his house
 doth come. to be broken up.

43. But know this, that if the 44. Therefore be ye also ready :
 goodman of the house had known for in such an hour as ye think not
 in what watch the thief would the Son of man cometh.

COMPARE WITH MARK, XIII. 32, 33, AND LUKE, XII. 39, 40.

There is much diversity of teaching between the
 gospels and the epistles, which has escaped notice,
 because the Scripture has not been rightly divided
 to the Church and to the Jewish nation. All has
 been given to the former, and anything not agreeing
 thereto has been quietly kept in the background ;
 but truth will bear the light, and concealing difficul-
 ties will not do in the present day.

The Jewish people are here charged to watch, for
 as a nation they shall not know when "the day of
 the Lord" shall come upon them. It shall overtake
 1 Thess. v. 2, 3. them "as a thief in the night," and "sudden destruc-
 tion shall come" (upon the wicked) "as travail upon
 a woman with child, and they shall not escape."

But it shall not be so with the Church, which
 2 Pet. iii. 10, 12. shall be "looking for and hasting unto the coming of
 the day of God ;" for "ye, brethren, are not in dark-
 ness, that that day should overtake you as a thief in

the night. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day ;" and it is only if the angel of the Church in Sardis does not watch and repent, that the Lord threatens to come on him as a thief.

The long time of the Lord's absence is as usual ignored in this parable : it speaks to the disciples as if they would be alive at the coming of the Son of man, and represents the Jews as numerous servants in charge of a great house, whilst the master is absent for an unknown time, with orders to have their loins girded and their lights burning, ready to sit down to meat with him whenever he should return.

The day indicated is certainly the day of the Lord's appearing, when the fate of all in charge will be decided, for the context refers to the time when angels are to gather out the unwatchful like tares, and leave the watchful and faithful servants to enter into the joy of their Lord.

No more than this can be directly deduced from the parable now before us, but students of prophecy are at no loss to assign a reason why the Lord gave such repeated and earnest charges to the Jews to watch believingly for His return, knowing to what severe tests their faith would be put in the night of His absence. In that dark time will come the anti-Messiah, the worst of all the false Christs who shall arise in those days, and deceive many. He will verify the Lord's prediction concerning the thief who is to come in his own name, with whom he contrasts himself as the Good Shepherd—"for the wolf cometh not but for to steal, to kill, and to destroy ;" and so it will be with "the idol shepherd," who will tear the flock, after he has come suddenly, like a thief and a robber, against Jerusalem, "to take the spoil, and take the prey ;" and after also taking the city,

1 Thess. v.
4-6.

Rev. iii. 3.

Luke, xii.
41.

Matt. xiii.
40-43.

Matt. xxv.
21, 23.

Matt. xxiv.
5.

John, v. 43.
John, x.
10-12.

Zech. xi.
16, 17.

Zech. xiv.
2.

Isa. x. 5, 6. will "tread down the Jews like the mire in the streets."

This event will commence Jacob's last and greatest
 Jer. xxx. 7. tribulation, called "the Day of the Lord," which
 Joel, ii. 1-3. shall come on the unbelieving nation as a thief in
 the night, and cause the Jews to become as wicked
 Ver. 37-39. as were the sinners to whom Noah preached re-
 pentance before the flood. To such Jews the Son of
 1 Thess. v. man will come in an hour that they think not.
 2, 3.

FAITHFUL & UNFAITHFUL SERVANTS.

MATT. XXIV. 45-51.

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>45. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?</p> <p>46. Blessed <i>is</i> that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.</p> <p>47. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.</p> <p>48. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord de-</p> | <p>layeth his coming ;</p> <p>49. And shall begin to smite <i>his</i> fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken ;</p> <p>50. The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for <i>him</i>, and in an hour that he is not aware of,</p> <p>51. And shall cut him asunder, and appoint <i>him</i> his portion with the hypocrites ; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.</p> |
|--|---|

COMPARE WITH MARK, XIII. 34-37, AND LUKE, XII. 41-48.

Isa. xli. 8 ; Israel, as a nation, is often called the Lord's ser-
 xlii. 19 ; vant.
 xliii. 10 ;
 xliv. 1-3 ; Peter's question in the forty-first verse of Luke
 xlv. 4. xii. makes it evident that this parable is quite dis-

Matt. xxv. 14-30. the Messiah's return, and then be dealt with, not so much according to the talents committed to them, as

FAITHFUL AND UNFAITHFUL SERVANTS. 71

according to their observance or non-observance of His repeated injunctions to "watch" for His sudden return.

This parable represents the Jews as a nation, like unto the many servants in a large house, belonging to an absent lord, who left home charging them to watch vigilantly for his return, "lest coming suddenly, he should find them sleeping." Matt. xxv. 5.

In the middle of the seventieth week of years (which Scripture recognises as "the time of the Messiah's absence" and "the time of the end") the Antichrist will break his covenant with the Jews and come as suddenly and unexpectedly as a thief in the night, to usurp the Lord's throne at Jerusalem as "the profane, wicked Prince of Israel," and as the false Christ, to deceive the bulk of the Jewish people. Dan. ix. 24-27.
John, xvi. 16; Heb. x. 37.
Ezek. xxi. 25-27.

These unfaithful servants, after "falling away" from Christ to Antichrist, will begin to smite their watching fellow-servants; and whilst surfeiting with the drunken, the day of Christ will overtake them unawares; and judgment shall be administered without mercy, for he who knew his Lord's will and did it not, "to him it is sin." 2 Thess. ii. 2-4.
Luke, xxi. 34-36.
Rom. ii. 12, 13.
James, iv. 17.

But "blessed" shall be the servants whom He shall find "watching;" who, having exercised their stewardship wisely and well, shall be made rulers over all His goods: the Jews shall be first of nations on the regenerated earth, and the disciples shall reign on twelve thrones over the twelve tribes of Israel. Mic. iv. 8;
Isa. lx. 12.
Matt. xix. 28, 29.

The whole parable being an answer to Peter's question, teaches that if the disciples, knowing their Lord's will, fail to watch for His return, and after saying, "My lord delayeth his coming," should be-

come unwatchful and wicked, they shall be surprised by His coming in an hour they least expect, and be cut asunder, and have their place with unbelieving hypocrites, where is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

Matt. xxiii.

13-15, 33.

Matt. xiii.

42, 50.

Those who had not the same means of knowing their Lord's will shall have mitigated punishment; but the more we compare Scripture with Scripture, the less hope we are able to entertain that "the stripes" in Luke mean anything very different from the punishments of unwatchful servants elsewhere.

Matt. xxv.

12, 30.

The parable which immediately follows in Matt. xxv. is still further to enforce the important injunction: "Watch, therefore; for in such an hour as ye" (the Jewish nation) "think not, the Son of man cometh."

Matt. xxiv.

42, 44.

THE TEN VIRGINS.

MATT. xxv. 1-13.

1. Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

2. And five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish.

3. They that *were* foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

4. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

5. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

6. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

7. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

8. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

9. But the wise answered, saying, *Not so*; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

10. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

11. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

12. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

13. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

The main object of this parable, which has occasioned great perplexity, is simply to verify what the Messiah said to His disciples as representatives of the Jewish nation in the preceding chapter: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man. Watch, therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." Matt. xxiv. 36, 42.

To make this the more plain, the Lord here repeats, "Watch, therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh:" and observe how specially the *hour* is mentioned in which the foolish virgins were not watching. Ver. 13.
Acts, i. 7.

The word "then" connects this chapter with the 24th, which is about the things that are coming upon the earth just before the Lord comes. This chapter contains what will happen there just after He has appeared. Luke, xxi. 26.

The bride (the church of the elect) is not once mentioned or alluded to, because this marriage is the predicted reunion of Jehovah with the Jewish people on earth, the previously married wife; to whom the first dominion is to come in the day when the Lord shall take away the shame of her youth, and the reproach of her present state of widowhood and divorcement. Isa. liv. 1-8; Ps. xlv.
Jer. xxxi. 32; iii. 14, 20.
Mic. iv. 8.
Isa. l. 1.

When the Lord appears the Jewish remnant will exclaim, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation," for he has promised, "I will betroth thee unto me for ever. . . . I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call me Ishi" (my husband), "and shalt call me no more Baali." Then the marriage supper in Isa. xxv. 6 takes place. Isa. xxv. 9.
Hos. ii. 19, 20, 16.

The ten virgins denote the Jewish people in their own land in "the time of the end." They are called Dan. xii. 4, 9

virgins for no other reason than that such were always in attendance at a Jewish marriage. Their being equally divided is not of any importance, as we know from another scripture that but a third part of the restored Jews will be saved into the Redeemer's kingdom—namely, the godly remnant who are “to inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.”

Zech. xiii.
8, 9.

Ps. xxxvii.
11, 29.

Matt. v. 5.

There is only one point in which the virgins are not alike: all went forth to meet the bridegroom; all took their lamps; all fell asleep; all arose at the midnight cry; all trimmed their lamps; but only the wise had the prudence and foresight to take more oil in other vessels, in case the bridegroom might tarry longer than expected, until “an *hour* that the others thought not of.”

This, then, is the point of importance, and constituted the only difference between the wise and the foolish: the wise were “ready” for all contingencies, according to their Lord’s command, “Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh;” the foolish were not “ready:” under no circumstances could “the children of light and of the day” be disappointed of their place at the marriage feast, having plenty of oil; but none to spare, because as the hour of the bridegroom’s coming could not be known, all that each one had might be needed for herself.

Matt. xxiv.
44.

The reason why the bridegroom tarried is not given: the necessity for it arose after His ascension into heaven, the punishing the Jews’ national sins in this world, and then His purpose of mercy to the Gentiles was revealed. We know also that His return is conditional on the repentance of the Jews, of which as yet there are no signs.

Matt. xii.
32.

Rom. xi.
11.

Acts, iii.
19-21.

The virgins all slumbered and slept. We may

therefore suppose that "sleeping" was the attitude of the Jews with regard to the Messiah's second advent at the time their New Testament history is interrupted, and that the same will be their condition when their history is resumed. Their wandering time being silently overpassed, we learn that "at midnight" there will be a cry, "Behold the bridegroom cometh:" at midnight when the darkness is the deepest, and lamps most wanted. But the sure word of prophecy tells us this cry will arise in the night of antichristian persecution, when physical and moral darkness will prevail, as they have never done hitherto.

Hos. iii. 4.

The cry is the resumed preaching of "the gospel of the kingdom" as a witness unto all nations, by miraculous agency more wonderful than at first in the days of the apostles; notwithstanding which there is to be a "falling away" from light into the darkness of the last days of many imprudent and unwatchful servants (those who begin to beat their fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken), who may be here symbolised by the foolish virgins.

Matt. xxiv.

14.

Rev. xiv. 6.

At this cry oil is needed, for lamps cannot burn without it; and the wise virgins will be well supplied, but for themselves alone, for in the matter of faith and watchfulness each one must act for herself.

Great uncertainty prevails among theologians who try to apply this parable to Christians now as to what is meant by oil: one asks, "What did the oil in the lamps betoken? Was it faith, or love, or what else?" and he ends as follows, "No one can certainly decide." But does not this difficulty vanish when we recollect that "the Holy Ghost was not then given," therefore oil cannot mean the Holy Spirit, as is generally supposed; and when we find the promise

John, vii.

39.

Dan. xii. 10. "the wise shall understand" belongs to the godly Jewish remnant in the last days, who declare, "Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light unto my path. O how love I thy law ! it is my meditation all the day." "My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning."

Ps. cxix. 105, 97.

Ps. cxxx. 6.

Thus by Jehovah's word the wise virgins will be kept watching ; but to the foolish virgins its disregarded warnings will be as lamps without oil : possessing the law, but drawing no light from it, they will be overtaken by the Redeemer's coming suddenly to Zion, and shut out of his kingdom.

Isa lix. 20;
Rom. xi. 26.

The door that shuts in the wise virgins is the door of the earthly department of the Messiah's kingdom finally closed against the foolish.

The plan of this parable is so simple, so apparently confined to one point, it contains but few words concerning the fate of the foolish virgins ; but we fear they are sufficient to identify them with the unfaithful servants in a preceding parable. For want of prudence and foresight they were both foolish and disobedient ; and being absent from the door at the decisive hour, they must be justly excluded from the kingdom, according to the Lord's prophecy, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven : " for "when once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us ; he shall answer, and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are ; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity."

Matt. vii. 21-23.

Luke, xiii. 25-27.

Wise and foolish here mean the same as wise and foolish builders in Matt. vii. 25-28, and as faithful

and unfaithful servants in Matt. xxiv. 45-51, whose doom is the same as the unprofitable servant, Matt. xxv. 30 : moreover, "the fool" and "the foolish" are Scripture names for the Antichrist and the deceived Jews in prophetic psalms, who must all be lost, for in the last days there will be but two classes of people in Israel's land, believers in Christ and in the Antichrist, according as it is written, "All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him (the anti-Messiah), whose names are not written in the book of life (of the Lamb) from the foundation of the world."

Ps. xiv. 1
liii. 1.

Ps. lxxiv.
18, 22 ; v.
5. 6.

Rev. xiii. 8.

THE TALENTS.

MATT. XXV. 14-30.

14. For *the kingdom of heaven is* as a man travelling into a far country, *who* called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

15. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one ; to every man according to his several ability ; and straightway took his journey.

16. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made *them* other five talents.

17. And likewise he that *had* received two, he also gained other two.

18. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

19. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

20. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents : behold, I have gained *beside* them five talents more.

21. His lord said unto him, Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant : thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things : enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

22. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents : behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.

23. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant ; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things : enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

24. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed :

25. And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth : lo, *there* thou hast *that is* thine.

26. His lord answered and said unto him, *Thou* wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I

reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed :

27. Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and *then* at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

28. Take therefore the talent from him, and give *it* unto him which hath ten talents.

29. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance : but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

30. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness ; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

This is the judgment of the Jews under Mosaic law and the covenant of works : it has nothing to do with the spiritual seed of Abraham, called at a subsequent time into a much higher position.

The connection between the present and the preceding parable is very strict. The parable of the talents commences with the word "for," which manifests its dependence upon the lesson of watchfulness with which the Lord concluded the history of the virgins.

The Messiah, knowing He would be rejected by the Jewish nation, and purposing to ascend into heaven, likens Himself unto a man who went into a distant country, warning His own servants (believing Jews who owned His authority) that the time of His absence must not be spent in idle expectation of His return, but that for a long time they must diligently exercise all the talents He intrusted to them, according to their different abilities or trades, for servants then were like slaves, who often received from their master money or goods wherewith to make profit for him.

Matt. xiii.
23. Elsewhere we are informed that the good seed of the kingdom will bring forth among the Jews, in some a hundred fold, some sixty, and some thirty fold.

Matt. xxiv.
3. Although this prophetic parable is among those spoken by the Messiah to His disciples on the

Mount of Olives, and He expressed Himself as if they would be alive at His return, it can only be as representatives of the last generation of believing Jews that He charged them to improve their talents, which still belonged to Him, and must all be accounted for. This is the more apparent, because, contrary to custom, it is here plainly announced that His absence is to be for "a long time." We are thereby assured that the New Testament silence concerning the eighteen hundred years of the Jews' wandering among the Gentiles is no mistake or contradiction, but is, according to the divine plan of revelation, recognised here very plainly; and also in the Old Testament, wherein it is said, "the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice; . . . afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God . . . in the latter days." To which agrees the prophecy in a subsequent chapter foretelling the Messiah's absence in heaven, and when and why He will return; "I will go and return to my place till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early." National repentance, therefore, to which the Jews were first called by John the Baptist, and afterwards by Peter at Pentecost, will bring back the Messiah in the last days.

Hos. iii. 4.

Hos. v. 15.

Hos. vi. 1.

Acts, iii.
19-21.

The "long time" is necessarily composed of the apostle's days—the dispersion or gap—and "the time of the end."

Dan. xii. 4,
9.

At this judgment the Lord will make good all His promises to the Jews whose calling is not heavenly. By comparison with the pounds, we learn that the right use of five talents will not only procure the owner the proportionate reward of five cities on the

Matt. xix.
29, 30; x.
41, 42.Luke, xix.
16, 17.

regenerated earth, but compensation an hundred fold for everything he gave up for the Lord's sake—with eternal life besides.

The slothful servant sins wilfully against his lord : he wrongs his master by hard thoughts, unjust accusation, and conduct injurious to his interests ; holds fast his sin to the close, and repents not, imputing his evil to his lord. He is therefore much worse than unprofitable ; and by his sentence we find he is parallel to the evil and unfaithful servant, whose exclusion from the kingdom is symbolised by the foolish virgins, who, like this unprofitable servant, did not do what the Lord said he ought to have done, and therefore could have done.

Matt. xxiv.
51.

Eph. ii. 9,
10 ; Tit. iii.
4-7.

It is wonderful that the difference of teaching in the parables from that of the epistles for the Church has not been more remarked. When pointed out, it has even been denied, and the observers accused of heresy.

2 Tim. iv.
1.

This judgment is that of " the quick " or living at the appearing of the Lord to judge both the quick and the dead, and to set up His kingdom. Where, then, is the millennium ? and how can the wicked dead be judged at the end of it ? Scripture says

Rev. xi. 18.

plainly, " the time of the dead that they should be judged " is, when the Lord gives reward to His servants the prophets, and to His saints, and to them that fear His name : the time when He will " still the enemy and avenger, and destroy all His enemies out of His land." The judgment therefore of the

Ps. viii. 2.

Ps. x. 16.

John, v. 28,
29 ; Dan.
xii. 1.

Rev. xx. 5,
7-10.

wicked dead will soon follow that of the righteous, which will leave a residue of the wicked to arise for destruction at the end of the first thousand years of the Messiah's eternal reign.

In the nineteenth chapter of Luke there is a par-

able (the pounds) very similar to this; but it was spoken to a different class of people, for a different purpose, and in a different place. It is more comprehensive than this, for it not only predicts the reward of all diligent and faithful servants, but the slaying and utter destruction of all the enemies who will oppose the setting up of the Messiah's kingdom.

We think enough has been already said to refute the notion which is entertained by some people from the words "His own servants," that it is the disciples alone who are to be judged here. They received very peculiar talents, and are charged elsewhere to bring forth by them "much fruit," in virtue of their union with the Messiah. They did so above all other servants, so that He has made known His will to reward them above all others in His kingdom, giving the twelve Jewish apostles twelve thrones, that they may judge or rule over the twelve tribes of Israel. The place of Judas is supplied by Matthias, upon whom the lot fell by the Lord's appointment. Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, shows how rigidly the teaching of all apostolic ministers will be tried as by fire; yet he is sure he shall give account with joy, and knew by the spirit that his converts will be to him "a crown of rejoicing in the day of judgment."

John, xv. 5.
6.

Matt. xix.
27, 28.

1 Cor. iii.
9, 13, 14.
Heb. xiii.
17.
1 Thess. ii.
19; 2 Cor.
i. 14; Phil.
iv. 1.

THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS.

MATT. xxv. 31-46.

31. When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory : gathered all nations : and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats :
32. And before him shall be 33. And he shall set the sheep

on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

34. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world :

35. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink : I was a stranger, and ye took me in :

36. Naked, and ye clothed me : I was sick, and ye visited me : I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

37. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

38. When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

39. Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

40. And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of

these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.

41. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels :

42. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink :

43. I was a stranger, and ye took me not in : naked, and ye clothed me not : sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

44. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

45. Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me.

46. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment : but the righteous into life eternal.

This passage of Scripture is greatly misunderstood : it predicts no general assize of both living and dead, as is commonly supposed.

It is a judgment of living only ; of some alive at the Messiah's coming : not of Jews and Gentiles mixed, but of Gentiles only ; not of individuals, but of nations—living Gentile nations.

There are three classes of people in this parable—1st, "the righteous," who are called sheep ; 2d, brethren of the Lord, to whom the righteous ministered ; and 3d, "the goats."

These "brethren of the Lord" are the Jews who were judged in the preceding parable. They are quite distinct from sheep and goats here, who are "the righteous" and "the cursed."

The Lord will deal with the sheep according to their works. They knew not that they were done to

Christ. Faith in Him is not made the condition of reward, but mercy shown to the Jews; not in time past or present, but in the time of "Jacob's trouble," out of which the Redeemer will come to Zion to save them that turn from ungodliness in Jacob.

Jer. xxx. 7.
Isa. lix. 20.
Rom. xi.
26.

In the blessing and cursing of these Gentile sheep and goats, God's promise to Abraham will be ultimately and literally fulfilled—"I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee."

Gen. xii. 3.

The goats will be thoroughly swept away into Gehenna, and burnt with unquenchable fire.

Matt. iii.
12.
Matt. xiii.
41.

It is quite possible to point out some of the nations that are to be judged, and thus destroyed at the coming of the stone of Israel. Daniel throws much light upon this subject. The great image in the second chapter symbolises the Gentile nations having power over the Jews from the time of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, to the cutting off of the Messiah in the 69th week (of years), where the break in prophecy during the dispersion of the Jews begins; and it ends with the beginning of the 70th week. The seventh chapter contains the resumed and final history of all these nations, specially of the fourth beast (or kingdom) in its last and worst (because Satanic) phase, divided ultimately into the ten toes (or kingdoms), whose kings are to give their power and strength unto the beast. All these Gentile nations, being found in open rebellion at Armageddon with the Antichrist, shall be utterly dashed to pieces like a potter's vessel.

Gen. xlix.
24.

Dan. ix. 26,
27.

Dan. ii. 40-
42; Rev.
xvii. 12, 13.
Ps. ii. 1-3.
Rev. xix.
11-21.
Ps. ii. 9;
Rev. ii. 27.
Isa. xv.
xvi. xix.

By the prophetic "burdens" in Isaiah, we learn that many nations will be resuscitated in "the time of the end," in resumed enmity to Israel, which will bring upon them greater and more permanent destruction than before; and in the prophecies of

Zech. i. 18-21. Zechariah, the enemies of Israel in "the last days" are symbolised by four horns, and the nations that are to befriend the Jews and fray the others away are represented by four carpenters. We cannot doubt these friendly nations will be among the "blessed" in this parable.

In the 32d verse of this chapter we must take the expression "all nations" with the same limitation as in Joel, iii. 2, where it is said, "I will gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and my heritage Israel;" because the Bible only speaks of the prophetic earth, and of the nations formerly in connection with the Jews; never of the ten modern European kingdoms, which are counted so many different ways by recent writers belonging to the historical and year-day school of interpretation.

Rom. xi. 29. "The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable"—
 Mal. iii. 6. neither God nor His purposes ever change; there-
 Deut. xxxi. 1-6. fore the nations that Israel failed to exterminate at
 Deut. xxxiii. 27-29. His command when He first led His people into
 Amos, ix. 15. Canaan He will Himself utterly destroy at His
 Gen. xv. 18-21. second advent, and then plant the remnants of
 Judah and Israel in all the length and breadth of
 Immanuel's land, according to His unconditional
 and everlasting covenant with Abraham.

Rev. xvi. 16; xix. 15-21; Ps. xviii. 37-42. The battle of Armageddon will, in fact, be the
 Hag. ii. 22. first act of the Redeemer's great national judgments
 Isa. xxxiv. 2, 8. after His appearing, of which it is written, "I will
 overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy
 the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen." "The
 indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and His
 fury upon all their armies: He hath utterly destroyed
 them, He hath delivered them to the slaughter; for

it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion."

Then shall judgment "go from nation to nation," desolating, above all others, Babylon, the seat of Jerusalem's first and last enemies. The star of Jacob shall "smite the corners of Moab," and "Moab shall be trodden down by him even as straw for the dunghill." "He shall destroy all the children of Seth" (of tumult), and "utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven."

Isa. xix.
19-21;
cxxxvii. 7-9.
Isa. xxv.
10; Num.
xxiv. 17, 20.

Ex. xvii.
14.

In this destruction Israel shall be the Lord's "battle-axe and weapons of war; for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms, and will give their dwelling-places to Israel in perpetual possession;" after which, saith the Lord God, "There shall be no more a pricking brier unto the house of Israel, nor any grieving thorn of all round about them that despised them." "They shall dwell with confidence," "when I have executed judgments upon all those that despised them round about them; and they shall know that I am Jehovah, their God."

Jer. li. 20;
Dan. ii. 44;
Ps. cxviii.
10-12.
Amos, ix.
12.

Ezek.
xxviii. 24.

Isa. xxxii.
17.
Ezek.
xxxiv. 25-28.

This surely proves that the judgment foretold in this parable is to be more of a warlike than of a legal character—much less like a great assize than has hitherto been imagined. What it plainly teaches is, that in the Redeemer's kingdom, according to His everlasting purpose before the foundation of the world, there shall be Gentile nations blessed upon the regenerated earth for ever; but for others "there shall no place be found." "Upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness, and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions. And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble;

Dan. ii. 35.
Zech. xiv.
20.
Obad. 17,
18.

and they shall kindle in them, and devour them, and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau, for the Lord hath spoken it."

2 Pet. iii.

1-13.

Mic. i. 3, 4.

Isa. lxvi.

19.

The effect of all this will be the establishment of a kingdom of righteousness and peace on this world, regenerated both by fire and sword; for notwithstanding the former, we find there will be many Gentile nations unaffected by the judgment predicted in this parable, who will be ignorant of the Redeemer's fame, and of the power and great glory with which He will then have set up His dominion

Ps. lxxii. 8.

Ps. cxlv.

12, 13.

Ps. cx.

Ps. ii. 8.

Mal. i. 11.

from sea to sea in Israel's land, whence He will send the saved Israelites to all lands to tell of the marvellous acts with which He has redeemed His people, and put down all their enemies under their feet. Then Jehovah-Jesus shall "ask the heathen for His inheritance," and "from the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same His name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto" (His) "name, and a pure offering;" and all nations shall then serve and obey the Lord and His Christ.

Dan. vii.

27; Rev.

xi. 15.

There is superabounding proof here that the world cannot possibly be converted by Gospel preaching before the Lord comes. In no other passage of Scripture than this are Gentiles ever called "sheep," which is a designation exclusively belonging to the Jewish flock of the Shepherd of Israel. Even John, x. 16 is no exception; for Jesus spake there of the scattered ten tribes who are to be united to Judah and Benjamin at His second coming, and are to be one fold under one Shepherd on the mountains of Israel for ever. The nations here called "sheep" must be so termed because they are saved of the Redeemer's good pleasure into His everlasting king-

Ps. lxxx. 1-

3-

Ezek.

xxxiv. 12-

16.

Ezek.

xxxvii. 20-

22.

dom, and, as nations, will endure for ever; but the "wicked nations that forget God" shall go "into everlasting punishment," meaning they shall never be restored as nations, and therefore, as such, they are punished everlastingly. Ps. ix. 17.

It should never have been affirmed that without the 46th verse the eternal life of the members of Christ's Church cannot be proved. Many texts not containing the word "everlasting" clearly prove the saints will be "ever with the Lord," "like Him" in His glorious body; consequently they will be immortal, corruption having put on incorruption; and, "receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved," they will have an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them that are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. 1 Thess. iv. 17. Phil. iii. 21. 1 Cor. xv. 53. Heb. xii. 28. 1 Pet. i. 3-5. 1 John. iii. 2. Rev. iii. 21.

It should not surprise any one who has reflected on the break in prophecy and its consequences, that there is actually no judgment of what is called Christendom to be found in Scripture; but without hesitation we infer that all its wicked dead will be judged and condemned from the great white throne, which is also the throne of glory set for judgment "in the heavens, when Jehovah's kingdom ruleth over all." Rev. xx. 11-13. Ver. 31; Ps. ix. 7. Ps. ciii. 19.

Alford agrees with Olshausen and Stier that the "blessed" in Matt. xxv. cannot be Christians. It would be impossible for them so to answer who had done all for Jesus' sake. "It is easy to say the expressions merely indicate humility. This is not the character of Christian humility, which is always, when healthy, conscious of its true state. The language of the believer is that of Paul—"I have laboured, yet not I, but the grace of God that is in me."—Dunn.

THE OLD GARMENT; OR, NEW WINE.

MARK, II. 15-22.

15. And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him.

16. And when the Scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?

17. When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

18. And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy dis-

ciples fast not?

19. And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride-chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.

20. But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

21. No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment: else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse.

22. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles.

COMPARE WITH MATT. IX. 14-17, AND LUKE, V. 29-39.

It is plain, from the contexts of this parable, especially that in Luke, that the Pharisees and the disciples generally did not understand why the Lord ate with publicans and sinners, allowing them also to do so; and why there was no fasting among his followers, as among those of John the Baptist and the Pharisees.

Fasting, therefore, was obviously the patch which they all thought should have been added to the Messiah's new doctrine of free forgiveness of sins, with the wedding garment of his perfect righteousness.

Such were the terms of the new covenant the Redeemer offered to the Jewish nation; but its rulers, zealous for the law of Moses, going about to establish their own righteousness, did not submit themselves to

the righteousness of God ; individuals only, chiefly from among the lost (or wandering) sheep of the house of Israel, accepted this new covenant ; because, having no righteousness of their own, they felt their need of the Great Physician. Matt. xv.
24.

These two parables teach that the old and the new covenants with Israel cannot be mixed ; that the one must pass away before the other can come in. The rejection of the new covenant, consequent on the rejection of the Messiah and the Holy Ghost, has delayed the reception of this promised blessing to the nation ; but it is still theirs as surely as the Word of God can make it, for no perversity of Israel can change the purposes of their faithful promiser, who says, " Behold the days come," saith the Lord, " that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah ; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt ; which covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them," saith the Lord : but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel ; after those days " (the days of future great tribulation), " I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts ; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord ; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord ; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more." Jer. xxxi.
31-34.

We have testimony in Paul's Epistle to the Romans that this happy time had not arrived in his day, and the present state of the Jews shows convincingly Zech. xiii.
1.
Rom. xi.
27.

John, xi.
50, 51. that it is yet future. The death of the Messiah for "that nation" has abidingly secured for Jacob the blessings of the new covenant, though as yet he knows it not.

Heb. viii.
6-13. Meanwhile it had a spiritual fulfilment to an elect spiritual Jewish Christian church (into which Gentiles were grafted), which the apostle, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, fully admits, not knowing how long this gracious election by the gospel of the grace of God would continue. It may be useful to remind the reader that it is not possible for God to make the promised new covenant with Gentiles: he never made an old one with them; and the new covenant must be made with the same nation or race of people with whom he made the old.

John, iii.
29; Luke,
vii. 32-34.
Mark, i.
14, 15.
Isa. vi. 9,
10; Matt.
xiii. 13-15.
Deut.
xxxii. 28,
29. Nought but joy and gladness should have accompanied the Messiah's preaching of the kingdom of God being "at hand;" but the blinded Jewish nation, devoid of spiritual understanding, clung not only to Mosaic ordinances, but even to the grievous burdens of the Scribes and Pharisees: and though "the true light" was "among" the Jews (not "within"), "the darkness comprehended it not."

Matt. xxiii.
2-4.
Luke, xvii.
21.
John, i. 4,
5, 9.
John, xvi.
16, 20.
Matt. xxiii.
37, 38;
Luke, xix.
43, 44.
Zech. xii.
10-12. The publicans and sinners who repented and were made whole became "the children of the bride-chamber," who could not fast while the bridegroom was with them; but the Messiah predicted as not far distant a time of mourning to his disciples especially, and to the Jews generally.

Hos. v. 15;
vi. 1.
Isa. lxiv. 1. National misery from the Lord's absence has ensued ever since, and will continue till "the time of the end:" when Scripture teaches there will be godly mourning for national sin in Judea, and a crying for pardon to the absent bridegroom, with fasting and in sackcloth.—Joel, i. 13-16.

Fasting, therefore, was not required as long as Jesus was on earth preaching the kingdom ; but when that was rejected, and the bridegroom was crucified, and departed into heaven, then did the believing disciples mourn.

Mark, xvi.
10.

In the first parable the Messiah spoke of men's wisdom in not patching an old garment (the law) with a bit of strong new cloth (margin, raw or unwrought), otherwise the rent or division would become worse. So with his teaching—a bit of it, new, strong, and undeveloped, should not be applied to the Mosaic law (the old garment), which, though then apparently waxing old and nigh to dissolution, was not to be torn or destroyed at that time.

Heb. viii.
13.
Matt. v.
17, 18.

In the second parable the Lord made this still clearer by saying, that like as men would do with new wine and old leather bottles, so would he not put his new wine (doctrine and practice) into these Pharisees or John's disciples (old bottles belonging to the law), but into new bottles or skins—(viz., publicans and sinners previously sick, but now made whole), whereby both His doctrine and His disciples would be preserved.

“No man” (none of the legally righteous) accustomed to drink the wine of the old law would relish the new ; they would say, “the old is better,” and so they did ; but herein was their mistake—not new wine, but the new covenant, parabolically spoken of, is much better than the old.

Rom. x. 2,
3.
Heb. xi.
39, 40.

To the Jew accustomed to the many requirements of the law, the old wine was milder and more palatable than the Messiah's new and self-denying teaching, which required the rich to sell all to feed the poor, and to take up their cross to follow Him. This was more mortifying to the flesh than the demand of

Matt. x. 38.
Matt. xix.
21.

Lev. xix. 18. the law to be just and kind, and to give to the poor out of the abundance promised to the obedient. To
 Matt. v. 43. 44. love his neighbour was an acknowledged duty, but to love his enemies was quite new, and much more difficult.

We must remember, however, that the old law is not to be condemned or despised, for "it is holy, just, and good;" but the new and living way was even at the first so much better and more excellent than the old, that by faith in their visible Messiah, publicans and sinners went into the kingdom before self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees.

The reason why Paul wrote of the Mosaic covenant as "waxing old" and "nigh to dissolution" is, that by divine direction the wandering time of the Jews among the Gentiles is always passed over in silence, as if it did not exist; therefore the second advent and all its attendant events are ever represented as close "at hand."

Rom. xiii. 12; Phil. iv. 5; Heb. x. 37.

THE SEED GROWING SECRETLY.

MARK, IV. 26-29.

26. And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground;

27. And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.

28. For the earth bringeth forth

fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.

29. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

"This parable is commonly interpreted of the work of grace in the heart of a believer—a conclusion founded upon the mistaken meaning of the phrase

'the kingdom of heaven' or 'of God.' But that it cannot be so interpreted here is clear, if from this circumstance alone, that the work of grace is dependent, from day to day, upon the sustaining care of Him that implanted it at first, while the seed here is represented as independent of the sower; neither is it true that the soul of itself brings on the various stages of Christian growth."

It is miraculous interference with the present course of things that is prophesied in this parable.

The seed of the Gospel, or good news of the coming kingdom of the Messiah, was sown in Palestine by visible and miraculous agency, which has ceased now for more than eighteen hundred years; because the Lord waits for the regathering of His own chosen nation, on whose behalf all miracles have been wrought hitherto, and of whom in the future it is written, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt: but the Lord liveth, which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them: and they shall dwell in their own land." "According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt, will I show unto them marvellous things." "And with terrible things in righteousness" shall Zion be redeemed with judgment.

Jer. xxiii.
7. 8.

Mic. vii. 15.

Ps. lxxv. 5.

Isa. i. 27.

As with a field in harvest time, full of activity and bustle, so will it be with the land of Israel when the Lord shows Himself mindful of His covenant, and "the set time" comes "to reap the vine of the earth," and to "gather the wheat into His barn."

Mic. vii. 20.

Ps. cii. 13.

Rev. xiv.
18, 19.

Between the times of sowing and reaping there lies a period in which the work of the Lord is going for-

Matt. xiii.
30.

ward without any manifest interpositions on His part—not, indeed, without the daily ordering of His providence, in which some men see only a reign of law, which they vainly suppose shall never be interrupted, but as that He does not put forth His hand visibly and immediately, as at those two most important seasons, sowing and reaping.

“The non-interference of God until the harvest is a most important lesson, needing often to be kept before the eye of faith, lest we be offended at the sad miscarriage now so often visible to sight.” The miracles of Jesus at His first advent were an earnest and pledge of those which are to be continuously revealed at His second coming during His eternal reign, which will also be the true dispensation of the

Joel, ii. 28;
Ezek.
xxxix. 29.

Jer. xvi. 18.
Isa. xl. 1,
2.
Rev. xviii.
6.

Holy Ghost. If we bear in mind that this intervening period is not for the evangelisation of the world, but for the dispersion of the Jews, of whom the Lord has said, “But first I will recompense their iniquity and their sin double,” and that before Jerusalem can be comforted she must have “double” punishment from the Lord’s hand for all her sins, we shall see that the continuance of miracle in the present time would have been an anticipation of the powers of the world to come in the kingdom of the Messiah; in connection with which, accordingly, we find a revival of them surely predicted.

How the devil sowed tares in Immanuel’s land, and how leaven will certainly corrupt the whole of the three measures of meal, have been so particularly explained in former parables, we need not repeat what is said on them, or on the parable of the unclean spirit, which bears directly upon the restraint of Satanic power in this interim dispensation; but we may remind the reader that in “the time of the

end" the devil will be cast into the earth, having great wrath, knowing that his time is short, and will empower the Antichrist "to work signs and wonders, with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish," causing "strong delusion, that they should believe" the lie that he is the Jews' promised Messiah.

Rev. xii. 12.

2 Thess. ii. 9-11.

The absence of the Jews as a nation from the field where all these marvels are to occur, and the restraint of Satan, are the letting powers in action now to the manifestation of "the man of sin;" but as soon as Jewish history is resumed, and the devil is finally expelled from heaven into Immanuel's land, there will no longer be any hindrance to the great "falling away" which will be consequent upon the revelation of "that wicked," "the son of perdition."

2 Thess. ii. 3-8.

Miracles, however, shall not all be then against the truth. God's two Jewish prophets shall be His two witnesses in its favour, with power to smite their enemies with plagues as often as they will; till, for God's glory, He permits them to be killed, that He may bring them to life again the third day, and receive them up to heaven in the sight of all their antichristian foes, who are to be destroyed with earthquake, hailstones, and "an horrible tempest" of fire and brimstone, which the Lord is to rain down from heaven upon all His enemies at His coming, —the signs of that great and dreadful day being all as miraculous as the sun standing still in the days of Joshua long ago, that miracle and those yet to come fulfilling literally the words of God by Moses —that the heavenly bodies were made for signs as well as for seasons.

Rev. xi. 3-12.

Rev. xi. 13.

Ps. xi. 6;
Ezek.
xxxviii. 22.

Isa. xxix. 6.

Joel. ii. 30,
31; Acts,
ii. 19, 20.

Josh. x. 12-14.

Gen. i. 14.

THE TWO DEBTORS.

LUKE, vii. 36-50.

36. And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

37. And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that *Jesus* sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment,

38. And stood at his feet behind *him* weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe *them* with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed *them* with the ointment.

39. Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw *it*, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman *this is* that toucheth him : for she is a sinner.

40. And *Jesus* answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.

41. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors : the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.

42. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them

both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most ?

43. Simon answered and said, I suppose that *he*, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

44. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman ? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet : but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped *them* with the hairs of her head.

45. Thou gavest me no kiss : but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

46. My head with oil thou didst not anoint : but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

47. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven ; for she loved much : but to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little.

48. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

49. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also ?

50. And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee ; go in peace.

Difficulties arise when these verses are applied to Gentiles now ; but there are no difficulties to those who see the Evangelist is simply relating a parable specially applicable to the Jews at the time their Messiah was visibly among them, which He applies directly to Simon and the woman.

We may hope Simon was a believer in the Messiah, or at least was in an inquiring state of mind, preparing to become so. This is shown by the fact of his having invited *Jesus* into his house : his

doubtfulness is proved by his not having shown Him all the courtesies that are usual in the east. Houses there being quite open, and classes of society not so divided as they are here, it is not wonderful that a woman of dubious character should have gained admission to the sinner's friend in the Pharisee's house. Simon's faith in Jesus was checked by His apparent want of discernment what sort of person she was: as the predicted great prophet, He should have been a discerner of spirits, which He proved himself to be, discerning even the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Gen. xviii.
4; Exod.
xviii. 7;
Jud. xix.
21.

Jehovah-Jesus is the "certain creditor;" Simon and the woman are "the two debtors;" and sins against the law of Moses are "the debts."

Isa. xi. 2,
3-
John, ii.
24, 25;
Matt. ix. 4;
John, i. 48;
iv. 29.

The woman's sins were in comparison with Simon's as five hundred to fifty: both were fully and freely forgiven. The question was, which would love most the merciful benefactor.

It is not true now, that the more people have sinned and been forgiven, the more capable they are of the highest love; or that they love only in proportion to the amount of mercy bestowed.

The time was not yet come, by the Jew's rejection nationally of the king, the kingdom, and the Holy Ghost, for the revelation of the mystery of the Church; whose Christian doctrine—"we love God, because he first loved us," is very different from this parable, which says the woman was forgiven because she loved much.

1 John, iv.
19.

Her faith was like Martha's, in Jesus as the Christ, the anointed Messiah promised in the Jewish scriptures; therefore He said unto her, "thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." The Lord discerned the state of her heart as well as that of Simon's: He

John, xi.
27.

knew that though as yet He had not declared her pardon, she loved Him for all the goodness He had shown to publicans and sinners, which caused her lovingly to desire the same mercy in her own case : on account, therefore, of her love and her faith, she obtained forgiveness of sins ; just as the woman who touched the hem of the Redeemer's garment obtained a perfect cure of her disease, because she had faith in His miraculous power to afford relief ; unto whom He said, " Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole ;" meaning that her faith was the procuring cause of her being healed. Also in the case of two blind men, to whom it was said, " According to your faith be it unto you," and because they believed Jesus to be " the Son of David " possessing miraculous power, they both received their sight : and to another blind man Jesus said, " Receive thy sight, thy faith hath saved thee."

Matt. ix.
20-22.

Matt. ix.
27-30.

Luke, xviii.
42.

In these instances, and in the parable now before us, it is easy to see specialties incident to the transitional character of the time in which the events occurred, lasting no more than the three years of the Messial's ministry on earth.

Mrs Fry testified that in her experience among criminals of every kind, " no passage of Scripture was so greatly blessed to the conversion of sinners as this declaration of the Saviour's power and willingness to forgive sins fully and freely. Often the hardest hearts were immediately broken under its subduing and gracious influence."

THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

LUKE, x. 25-37.

25. And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

26. He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

27. And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

28. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

29. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

30. And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

31. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed

by on the other side.

32. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

33. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him.

34. And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

35. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

36. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

37. And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

Notwithstanding all the practical benefits that Christians may have inferentially drawn for themselves from this parable, it was spoken by the Messiah for the benefit and instruction of Jews, still under Mosaic law.

They hated their neighbours, the Samaritans, to such a degree, that "a Samaritan was deemed by a Jew a mere idolator, who worshipped the image of a dove. He was publicly cursed in the Jewish synagogues. The Jews prayed he might have no part in the resurrection of life. His testimony was in no case to be received. The Jew who entertained a

Samaritan was laying up judgments for his own children. To eat a morsel of his fare was as bad as eating swine's flesh. A pure Hebrew would endure any woe rather than be beholden to a Samaritan or Cuthite."

Luther, Melancthon, and many other writers, suppose the Saviour Himself may have been the "Good Samaritan;" but we agree with more recent divines, who cannot think this is the meaning of the parable. The Messiah was a Jew, and salvation is of the Jews, and not of the Samaritans.

When the Jewish lawyer asked Jesus, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" the Lord referred him directly to the law of Moses, which says, "Ye shall keep my statutes and my judgments; which if a man do he shall live in them." And when the lawyer quoted the commandments, and ended with the requirement to love his neighbour as himself, Jesus said "Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live."

Need we any further witness than this, that the law was not then "done away," as the vail afterwards was to them that believed; yet Paul gives us more at a subsequent time when he says, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." Ignorance of the prophecies, converting all their literalities for the Jewish nation into spiritualities for the present visible Church among the Gentiles, and various other errors, such as not seeing the very progressive nature of the revelations of God, and that the new covenant did not come in generally and absolutely with the Messiah, so as to do away with the law altogether (the ten commandments excepted), have blinded the eyes of most Christians to the positively Jewish character

John, iv.
22.

Lev. xviii.
5.

Matt. xii.
50.

Matt. v. 17,
18.
2 Cor. iii.
14.

Rom. iii.
31; x. 5.

of the Gospels, which is so observable here, it has not entirely escaped comment: nevertheless it is ultimately denied, because it does not accord with the Gospel of grace which was afterwards revealed to Paul for the Church of the elect, after the Jewish nation finally rejected the Gospel of the kingdom.

“Until John” and until “grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,” obedient law-keeping procured life, in virtue of the all-atoning sacrifice to be in due time offered for such accepted worshippers, although unknown to them; but after “the Lamb of God” appeared as Messiah the king, with power to demand fulfilment of the law, or submission to the alteration of it, according to His will, faith in Him personally and in His new doctrines were requisite to the gaining of eternal life, as well as continued obedience to the law.

Matt. xi.
13; John,
i. 17.

In this parable Jesus enforced the command, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,” having respect to peculiar circumstances at that time, for the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. He sanctioned no such divisions, and in His command to the lawyer to go and do like unto the Samaritan, He taught that all men are neighbours.

Lev. xix.
18.

John, iv. 9.

Nothing can be more plain than that Jesus meant the Jewish lawyer to learn that in those peculiar days, when He, the great teacher, was on earth to prescribe what His followers should do, an obedient and compassionate Samaritan would be more akin to Him, nearer to the kingdom of heaven, and more likely to inherit eternal life, than the lawyer who knew the law of Moses, but was so far from loving his neighbour as himself that in the case supposed he would have acted the very same part as the priest and Levite.

In this mention of "priest and Levite," we cannot but see implied censure of that class of Jewish teachers in those days—such men as are denounced in Matt. 23. There is nothing in favour of priest-craft here; it was not being a priest or Levite that made Jews then servants of God, but the keeping of whatsoever the Messiah commanded them to do, especially in the way of mercy.

We shall see this set forth still more forcibly in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, where Dives is made to endure the immediate consequences after death of having shut up his bowels of compassion to his suffering Jewish neighbour; proving also how hard it was for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God in that dispensation.

Luke, xviii.
24.

THE FRIEND AT MIDNIGHT.

LUKE, XI. 5-13.

5. And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

6. For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?

7. And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

8. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

9. And I say unto you, Ask,

and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

10. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

11. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

12. Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

13. If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

This parable must be considered with its contexts, the 13th verse being of peculiar importance.

The Redeemer often prayed so long and so earnestly, He was an example to His disciples to do so perseveringly and importunately.

Importunity in prayer is the lesson here; but it is not prayer at all times nor for all things, but it is prayer for a special object—the coming of the Messiah's kingdom, which the disciples and Jews of that generation were to seek admission into by asking and knocking perseveringly, with absolute promises of finding the door, and having it opened to them: into which kingdom at one time they are represented as resolutely forcing their way; and at another, it is said they found the gate so "straight and narrow" that few were going in thereat.

Matt. vi.
10, 13.

Ver. 9, 10.
Matt. vii. 7,
8.

Luke, xvi.
16.
Matt. vii.
13, 14, 21.

Now let us analyse "the Lord's prayer," which Jesus taught, at their request, in preceding verses, to His Jewish disciples, and see if it was really meant for them, or chiefly for the members of the visible Church now among the Gentiles. The commencement, "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name," refers to the glorious God whom all Jews claimed as their father, whose name Jehovah was so respected that it was never pronounced by them: it is avoided here, as it is elsewhere avoided by the Jewish apostle Paul, even whilst writing to Gentiles.

John, viii.
41.

Phil. ii. 9-
11.

"Thy kingdom come" means no spiritual kingdom, for a kingdom is a literal and visible thing. This is "the kingdom of heaven" or "of God," which was being daily preached to the Jews as future, but "nigh at hand," by the Redeemer Himself.

Mark, i. 14,
15.

"Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth," is a petition that will be fulfilled to the letter when the

Messiah's kingdom is established at His second coming, and all things both in heaven and in earth are gathered together in one glorious whole.

"Give us day by day our daily bread," or as it should be translated, "Be thou giving us day by day our daily bread," as promised when Jesus sent His disciples forth without supplies of any kind, saying, "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink ; . . . but seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness : and all these things shall be added unto you."

"And forgive us our sins as we forgive our debtors;" the Lord here teaches these men to say,

"For we also forgive every one that is indebted to us:" their confidence being founded on the Messiah's teaching, "Judge not, that ye be not judged ; for with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again." See also Mark, xi. 25-26, where the word "trespasses" being used shows that transgressions of Mosaic law are referred to regarding the dealings of one Jew with another.

"And lead us not into" (the) "temptation, but deliver us from" (the) "evil" (to come). This refers to "the hour of temptation that is to try all that dwell upon the earth" in "the time of the end," the great Jewish tribulation which the Spirit always represents as near at hand, because all the wandering time of the Jews is regularly passed over in silence.

If selfish, hard-hearted Jews knew how to give good gifts unto their children, and were stirred up by persevering urgency to give to their fellow-men what they desired ; how much more surely would their heavenly Father give ("good things") His Holy Spirit to them that asked it. This promise (especially given to the disciples) was realised to the Messiah's

whole company of Jewish believers at Pentecost, which was the national baptism of fire predicted by John, and the marvellous way that Jehovah fulfilled His promise of speaking to "this people with other tongues;" notwithstanding which, the nation "would not hear me, saith the Lord."

Acts, ii. 16.
Matt. iii.
11.
Isa. xxviii.
11, 12.
1 Cor. xiv.
21.

We must not suppose the disciples or any of the Jews who heard this first promise of the Spirit understood what it meant. Jesus often spoke what they had not spirituality to comprehend: and we must remember that when Jesus spoke as is recorded by John, the Holy Ghost was not given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. At Pentecost the Holy Ghost was given corporately, as well as so individually that the prophecy of Joel had a primary fulfilment in the inspiration of all the 120 of Israel's sons and Israel's daughters, which will be repeated in all its fulness after "the great and notable day of the Lord."

John, vii.
37, 39.

Joel, ii. 28,
29.

There is seldom anything more seen in this than the baptism of the Church, which many people think of as then composed of Gentiles, or of Jews and Gentiles then baptised into one body: but the fact is, the *ecclesia* was composed of Jews only—till, with the exception of Cornelius's household, the apostles (fifteen years after Pentecost) were commanded to turn to the Gentiles.

Acts, xiii.
45, 46.

THE COVETOUS RICH FOOL.

LUKE, XII. 15-21.

15. And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

16. And he spake a parable unto

them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

17. And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

18. And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

19. And I will say to my soul,

Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, *and* be merry.

20. But God said unto him, *Thou* fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

21. So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

The cause of the Messiah's teaching here is found in the 13th verse. A Jew applied to the Great Teacher John, iii. 2. to divide an earthly inheritance between him and his brother; and the lesson to be drawn from it is in the 15th, "Beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth."

Ver. 1.
Luke, xvi.
14

The Lord had just before been charging His disciples to "beware of the leaven of the Pharisees," "who were covetous," so that this parable was as appropriate to them as to the ignorant Jew who wished to make the Redeemer a judge and divider of earthly things, which He always taught them to use only as a means of procuring heavenly things.

No doubt a general lesson is to be learnt here against covetousness; but that the parable belongs entirely to the Jews is proved by the context, wherein Jesus contrasts the Jews with the Gentiles, saying, Ver. 29-33. "Seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, for all these things do the nations of the world seek after: but rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you: for your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Who can fail now to see the specialty of the Messiah's teaching to the Jews as a nation; and often to

His disciples as individuals of it, having a very particular mission to perform? Are not the following verses even more particularly addressed to them than to Jews in general?—"Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord."

Matt. x. 9.
10.

Luke, vi.
20-38.
Mark, vi.
7-9.

Directly the reverse was the position of the Jewish rich fool, who, like the man whose thoughts were fixed only on the earthly inheritance, did not seek first the kingdom of heaven, but forgot God whilst he heaped together treasure of earthly things, from which he was torn away in a single night. His sin was unbelief of what the Messiah was then preaching—viz., that the kingdom of God was nigh at hand: in his folly he increased his barns as if they were his in perpetual possession, and as if it were not written, "the prosperity of fools shall destroy them:" "riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven."

Matt. vi.
33.

Prov. i. 32.
Prov. xxiii.
5.

Quite contrary to all this Jewish teaching (suited only to the time of the Messiah's ministry previous to his rejection) is our experience, for we know that nothing that Christians can do now can make them in a similar manner rich towards God in Christ, for "by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and receiving of the Holy Ghost;" which was not given at the time this parable was spoken.

Eph. ii. 9.
10.

Tit. ii. 5.

John, vii.
39.

Previous to the outpouring of the Spirit on the company of Jewish believers in the Messiah at Pentecost, there was a way of doing according to the law, by

Luke, i. 6. which the doers were accounted "righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless:" Zacharias and Elizabeth were doing so at the very time when, we think we have shown in various preceding parables, that Jews in general were required to prove their faith by outward acts of obedience, and the sacrifice of things temporal, that they might gain things eternal.

THE ADVERSARY BY THE WAY.

LUKE, XII. 58, 59.

58. When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, *as thou art* in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him; lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison. 59. I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last mite.

COMPARE WITH MATT. V. 21-26.

This passage being one used by Roman Catholics in favour of purgatory, is an instance of the mistakes into which men are apt to fall when they lose sight of the Jewish sense of Scripture.

It is a prison and exaction for debt that is meant here—not either Hades or Hell.

In comparing this parable with Matt. v. 21-26, it is needful to keep in mind that Jesus was speaking to Jews, among whom there were three courts of justice—the court of the twenty-three; the court of the Sanhedrim; and the court at Jerusalem; each of which took cognisance of crimes, according to the degree of guilt involved. These were the tribunals to which the Lord referred.

"Therefore," said the Messiah to people under the law, "give diligence to agree with thine adversary quickly, lest he deliver thee to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison," the consequence of which would be incarceration there till the whole debt was paid to the uttermost farthing.

This is exemplified in the parable of the unforgiving servant, where in the exercise of a power possessed by oriental rulers, the lord of that servant sold him and his wife and children, and all that he had, and delivered him to the tormentors (jailors), till he should pay all that was due unto him. Matt. xviii.
25, 34.

We must not be carried away with the words "torment" and "tormentors." The former occurs in Matt. viii. 29, Luke, viii. 28; the latter in Matt. xviii. 30, 34. The first meaning of the original is to apply the touchstone or test; and as this in barbarous times was done by torture, he who applied the torture, or practically conducted the examination, was called the tormentor. But the name "tormentor" passed over to another officer, and came to mean a prison-keeper or jailor. In this way imprisonment, when unaccompanied with torture, is virtually spoken of as "torment;" and being delivered to the "tormentors" means, being shut up in prison till the debt is paid.

To the law all Jews were debtors. To them it said, like the unforgiving servant, "Pay me that thou owest," even to the minutest requirement. But now that the Redeemer was present with His people to teach them what sort of service was most acceptable to Him, they were to forgive, nay, even to love their enemies before any of their accustomed gifts at the altar of the temple could now be received by Him. As it is "gifts" and voluntary offerings that are here

Rom. xiii.
8.

mentioned, we may infer that temple worshippers should "owe no man anything," but should discharge all that was against them before they presumed to offer a gift, which however was not to be withheld, but subsequently offered. This is only a part of what should be learnt from this passage of Scripture, for reconciliation with a brother Jew is much more apparent; and "to love one another" (for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law) is the motive that Paul urges in saying, "Owe no man anything."

Even if this scripture be applied to men in general, as regards their sins against God, knowing as we do that they cannot possibly diminish the slightest portion of their debt to Him; the words, "till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing," ought, so far from teaching purgatory, to convince all the more forcibly of the eternal duration of the sinner's punishment; for though it is the intermediate state in which Dives is represented, he could not by any means get out of his place of confinement, which was Hades: therefore this scripture does not teach purgatory, from which Romish priests say they can procure release for sums of money, large and small.

THE GREAT SUPPER.

LUKE, XIV. 16-24.

16. Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many:

17. And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.

18. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The

first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.

19. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.

20. And another said, I have

married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

21. So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

22. And the servant said, Lord,

it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

23. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel *them* to come in, that my house may be filled.

24. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

The context teaches us that when this parable was spoken the Messiah was seated at table in the house of a chief Pharisee, one of whose guests discoursed upon the blessedness of those Jews who should eat bread in "the kingdom of God." That it was a great and costly entertainment may be implied from the contests for precedence which the Messiah observed among the rich and well clothed guests of the Pharisee. This gave occasion to His pointing out a much more excellent way to exercise hospitality—one by which "the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind," would be fed, and one very sure of being recompensed at the resurrection of the just. Ver. 1.

The Pharisees, as the peculiar representatives of the theocracy, prided themselves on being the specially "bidden" to the glorious festival which they expected would usher in the kingdom. For them, therefore, were the lessons contained in the 11th and 24th verses. Ver. 7-14.

"A certain man" means the Lord Himself; the "great supper" is the marriage supper of the King's Son; the "many bidden" are the "many called" but not chosen. Matt. xxii.
2, 3, 14.

The "servant" sent "to them that were bidden" means the disciples of Jesus sent to the Jews, who all began with one consent to make excuse—viz., the Pharisees, rich and proud—knowing not that they Matt. x. 5-7.

were sick, and in need of the great Physician. Their excuses were all the worldly things which made it hard for a rich man then to be saved, and which in those days choked the good seed.

Matt. xix.
23-25.
Matt. xiii.
22.

The servant, on their refusal, was sent to the "publicans and sinners" in the streets and lanes of the city (Jerusalem, symbolising the whole theocracy). These much despised sinners thankfully came in; yet there was room. So the Gentiles, who were first called by "the gospel of the kingdom" out of paganism, were gathered in from the highways and hedges—viz., all the "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise," who were converted before "the gospel of the kingdom" ceased (from the unbelief of the Jewish people and their rulers), and before "the gospel of the grace of God," "without the deeds of the law," was given to Paul for the Gentiles.

Acts, xv.
24-29.

Eph. ii. 12.

Gal. ii. 7-9;
2 Tim. i. 11.

The declaration is plain in the 24th verse, that none of the first invited Jews who refused shall have any place at the marriage supper,—that feast of fat things which is to be made when the Lord shall "destroy in Mount Zion the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations." And then, "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Isa. xxv. 6,
7.

Ver. 11.

It is to be feared that few rich proud Pharisees profited by this humbling warning, as we find the hostility of the Pharisaic party greatly increased when the Messiah repeated this parable in the temple on a subsequent occasion, with several suitable additions, such as the spitefully treating and killing the king's messengers, the destruction of the murderers and their city, the want of the wedding

garment, and the place of outer darkness where is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

It is easy to see that this parable in Luke's gospel must have been spoken some time previous to "the marriage supper" in Matthew's, and with partially different objects in view. Matt. xxii. 2-14

INTENDING TO BUILD A TOWER;
AND, A KING ABOUT TO MAKE WAR.

LUKE, XIV. 28-35.

28. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have *sufficient* to finish it!

29. Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,

30. Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

31. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth

whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand!

32. Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.

33. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

The scope of these parables is certainly contained in the 27th and 33d verses,—“Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.” “So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”

Should it be asked, Do not these important verses relate only to the Lord's twelve disciples? we reply in the words of the immediately preceding verses—“And

Ver. 25, 26, there were *great multitudes* with him: and he and 27. — turned and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Also in the Mark, viii. words of another chapter— "And when he had 24-38. called *the people* unto him, *with his disciples also*, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me: for whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever will lose his life for my sake and the Gospel's (of the kingdom), the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his life? Whosoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels."

These quotations prove the Messiah's invitation was general, though in some almost similar passages He spoke more specially to the apostles.

This invitation was to the "many called," who would not come, of that "sinful and adulterous generation," the Jewish nation; and the "whosoever" of that generation that heard and saw their Messiah. They were personally invited to follow Him, and were required to sell and give up all they then had for a portion in His future kingdom, worth more than a hundredfold.

The Jew who should begin to follow Jesus and not continue with Him would be like a foolish builder laying the foundation of a tower, and not able to finish it. The Jews were not required to

make a blind or losing bargain, nor even a hasty one, except in particular instances,—one being the man who asked leave to go first and bury his father, which request was refused, to teach the necessity of energy and decision in the matter of salvation, and to enforce most emphatically the command, “Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven.” They were exhorted to count the cost, like the intending builder of the tower in the parable, being forewarned of the hardships and persecutions they would have to endure in this world before they could enjoy the rewards of faithful service in the next. They were to ponder well before they came to Him who had not where to lay His head, that they might not be offended and fall away; “for no man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Mark, ix.
59.
Matt. viii.
21, 22.

Mark, x.
30.

Matt. viii.
20.
Luke, ix.
62.

Wise builders, therefore, in those days did sell all to follow the Messiah, and thereby obtained everlasting life and everlasting habitations. Having faith in Messiah’s person and promises, they believed their present loss would be future gain.

Luke, xvi.
9.
John, xii.
25, 26.

The sacrificing all things earthly was the strait gate they were exhorted to strive to get through,—so very difficult was it to them thus to build for eternity. Yet some did so; and to such wise builders the Messiah said, “Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God;” and theirs shall be all the other beatitudes.

Luke, vi.
20-23.
Matt. v. 3-
10.

“Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like: he is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat violently upon that house, and could not shake it; for it was founded

Luke, vi.
47-49.

on a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great."

In the Messiah's teaching there is generally a national as well as an individual application. It is so here, for in the passage just quoted, and in Matt. vii. 24-27, there is a prophetic reference to that overflowing scourge and greatest of tempests which

Isa. lix. 19;
xxviii. 2,
18.

finally shall "come in" upon the Jewish people "as a flood"—for notwithstanding this warning, the nation built upon the sandy foundation of their own righteousness, crucified their king, and blasphemed the Holy Ghost, and thus brought upon themselves

1 Thess. ii.
15, 16.

"wrath to the end." The builders who rejected the chief corner-stone were the Jews that stumbled and fell upon Jesus, the anointed Messiah—that "stone of stumbling and rock of offence, which shall finally grind the disobedient to powder."

Rom. ix.
32, 33.
Matt. xxi.
44; Dan.
ii. 44.

Deut.
xxxii. 4.

Isa. xxviii.
16; 1 Pet.
ii. 6.

Prov. xviii.
10.

Rom. xi.
26.

Ps. xviii.
1-3.

But "blessed" shall those be who build on Israel's rock, and put their trust in Him, for they shall never be put to confusion. This will be the case of the godly remnant; in that time of trouble they shall find that "the name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." "In their distress" they will call upon the Lord "their rock, their fortress, their deliverer, their buckler, their high tower; and so shall they be saved from all their enemies."

The next parable, of a king about to make war, is illustrative of the necessity for prudence and foresight in the Jews, both as individuals and as a nation. By it the Messiah taught that He will finally come

with irresistible and overwhelming force, therefore the Jews should wisely make peace with Him during the day of their merciful visitation, by accepting His terms whilst the threatened danger seemed a great way off.

This illustrates and enforces what is contained in the 33d verse—"So likewise whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple."

THE UNJUST STEWARD.

LUKE, XVI. 1-13.

1. And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

2. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

3. Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.

4. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

5. So he called every one of his lord's debtors *unto him*, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord?

6. And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.

7. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of

wheat. And he said unto him, take thy bill, and write fourscore.

8. And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

9. And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

10. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

11. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true *riches*?

12. And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

13. No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

According to the usual mode of interpretation, the difficulties of this parable are so great that a solution

of them has been declared impossible. The 11th verse, when well considered, shows that no commendation whatever of dishonesty is given, though much perplexity on this point has arisen from applying the parable to wrong people at a wrong time.

It is a lesson to "the children of light" in the Messiah's day on prudence with regard to heavenly things, from the greater wisdom displayed by worldly people about earthly things.

There are two lords spoken of in this parable: the lord of the unjust steward, in verses 3 and 5; and the blessed Lord of the Jews, who does not speak directly to them till the 9th verse.

The master of the worldly wise steward commends the policy of his servant, but not his dishonesty; he could not but acknowledge his worldly wisdom and prudence in the scheme he had devised for his future benefit: and in this respect alone did the Messiah propose it as an example to His disciples, endeavouring to provoke the Jews generally to a like degree of prudence about heavenly things.

He here calls earthly riches by the name of "the mammon of unrighteousness," because they stood in the way of men following Him, and taking up their cross as He invited them to do, assuring them that they could not serve two masters, "God and mammon:" if they cleaved to the latter, like the rich young man who had great possessions, they would despise Him.

Ver. 14. This parable was spoken to the Lord's disciples, and to covetous Pharisees who derided Jesus.

It may be paraphrased thus:—Because "ye cannot serve two masters," "make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness" (money and worldly goods), by "selling all to follow me;" that "when

ye fail" (become poor), "they" (the riches), having been used according to my commands, "may" become the means by which ye may "receive eternal life in everlasting habitations." "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth: if ye hold to earth, ye will despise me; and if ye be not faithful as my stewards in that which is least—namely, the earthly things I have given to prove your faith in me—how could I give heavenly things, which are the true riches?"—or durable things to come.

Matt. vi.
19-24.

Jesus refers in the 16th verse to the kingdom He was offering to the Jewish nation, teaching them that as no man can serve two masters, they should press into that kingdom, to obtain "everlasting habitations," with as much foresight, determination, and promptitude as the unjust steward, that he might be received into the debtors' houses when he might be no longer steward.

If we read the 16th and 17th verses as we find them in another gospel, thus:—"And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force; for all the prophets and the law prophesied until John,"—we shall see that pressing with earnestness into the kingdom, or with violence overcoming all temptations to do otherwise, was conduct highly approved, and the truest wisdom. And we shall also be saved from making the too common mistake, that the law and the prophets passed away when John the Baptist came preaching repentance and the near approach of that kingdom which would have been established according to a new and better covenant, if the Jews had nationally repented and all pressed into it.

Matt. xi.
12, 13.

Luke, v. 1;
viii. 45;
Matt. xv.
32.

In verses 10-12, reference is made to the rewards

the Lord has promised to His faithful Jewish servants when He returns. If the Jews were not faithful to their Redeemer about the little things of earth, how could they expect to be made rulers in the Messiah's kingdom—the true—called “your own” in the 12th verse, because the Jews are “the children of the kingdom.”

Matt. xiii.
38.
Mark, vii.
27, 28.

It may be useful to add, that although Jesus was here addressing His disciples as well as the Pharisees, He could not mean by “the true riches” the ministration of the Word by the Spirit which He afterwards gave them, for the mystery of the Church was a secret, the development of which depended upon, and was subsequent to, the rejection of the kingdom.

Rom. xvi.
25, 26.

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.

LUKE, XVI. 19-31.

19. There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day :

20. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

21. And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table : moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

22. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom : the rich man also died and was buried ;

23. And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

24. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the

tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue ; for I am tormented in this flame.

25. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things : but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

26. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed : so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot ; neither can they pass to us, that *would come* from thence.

27. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house :

28. For I have five brethren ; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

29. Abraham saith unto him

They have Moses and the prophets ; 31. And he said unto him, If let them hear them. they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

30. And he said, Nay, father Abraham : but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

There are two words in the Greek Testament—"Hades" and "Gehenna,"—both unfortunately translated in our version by the word hell.

In this parable the twenty-third verse should have been, "and in Hades he lifted up his eyes ;" therefore it teaches only concerning the intermediate state between death and judgment, and not at all about hell, the place of everlasting punishment.

This parable is a continuation of what the Messiah had been saying to His disciples in the hearing of deriding and covetous Pharisees, on the use that should be made of riches at the very particular time of His ministry. Ver. 14.

It teaches the consequences of Jewish unbelief, and how hard it was then for them that had riches to enter into the kingdom of God. Dives did not "sell all" to give to the poor and follow Jesus. He preferred the selfish enjoyment of good things in possession (like those Jews who would not come to the marriage supper), and had no compassion for the sufferings of the poor, not even of those of the Jewish beggar at his gate, whom he should have treated as a brother. He had no faith in Jesus till it was too late to escape from the grievous consequences of his unbelief, for by Moses and the prophets he should have recognised the Messiah as the Great Teacher sent by God, and should have obeyed His every requirement. Luke, xviii.
22-25.

The drop of cold water shows the nature and extent of Dives's sufferings in Hades ; and the unchangeableness of his misery till the judgment is Luke, xiv.
15.
Matt. xxii.
2-14.

also expressly taught; for nothing can be more plain than the impossibility of his release: therefore the Hades of his day differs greatly from Papists' purgatory, which was invented from this Scripture many centuries afterwards. And let it be carefully observed, this parable teaches solely concerning the punishment of sin committed during a very limited time, and under such peculiar circumstances, that no Jews but of one generation only could have refused to sell all to give to the poor, and follow the person of the Messiah on earth.

The evidences from Moses and the prophets, which should have been sufficient for Dives, were judged sufficient for all his brethren by One who, knowing all things, foresaw His own death and resurrection would not convince them, or the unbelieving nation to which they belonged, of His Messiahship.

We may safely infer, from what is said of Lazarus, that he had been a disciple of Jesus; and that to him in Hades there was a primary fulfilment of what is recorded in Luke, vi. 20-25—"Blessed poor! for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now, for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh. . . . But woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep," are words equally prophetic of Dives.

The spirit of Lazarus was carried by angels into a place of peace and rest, here called "Abraham's bosom,"—a figure which, according to Jewish ideas, expressed the best place possible after death: but the Jews often designated the upper part of Hades by the name of Paradise, from which important mistakes have arisen between the Paradise below and Paradise above in the third heavens.

Luke. xxiii.
43; Rev.
ii. 7; xxii.
22.

We think this is all that can be directly and certainly deduced from this much misunderstood parable: but from other and more recent scriptures we gather, concerning heaven and hell, what we fail to find here. Inferentially we learn that till the Saviour's death Hades was the common receptacle of the spirits of the just and the unjust,—terms that denote Jews under Mosaic law; but at the death of Jesus, whilst His body was hanging on the cross, His spirit descended into Hades, and made such a change with regard to the righteous and the dead whom he purposed to rescue, that the bars of Hades were rent asunder, and all the spirits of the heavenly calling must have ascended with Him from the upper part of Hades to Paradise in the third heavens, where the spirits of believers now, when "absent from the body," are immediately "present with the Lord" where He is, "far above all" (other) "heavens."

We may presume that the spirits of the wicked still go down to Hades, which is the bottomless pit. It is supposed to be in the heart of the earth. The wicked must remain there till the judgment, when death and Hades will give up the dead in unregenerated bodies, to be judged each one according to his works; after which both body and spirit will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, "which is the second death."

Hell does not yet exist: it is prepared for the devil and his angels after judgment, and will be kindled for the king (the Antichrist), whose body it will destroy like all others.

But in the case of the Antichrist and the devil, and all who in "the last days" shall worship them, their spirits are to be tormented in the lake of fire for ever and ever. Scripture nowhere says as much of

1 Pet. iii.
18, 19;
Eph. iv. 8-
10.

1 Pet. iii.
20; iv. 6.

2 Cor. xii.
2-4.

2 Cor. v. 1,
8.
Eph. iv. 10.

Ezek. xxvi.
20; Num.
xvi. 30.

Rev. xx.
11-13.

Rev. xx.
14, 15;
xxi. 8.

Matt. xxv.
41.

Isa. xxx.
33; Rev.
xix. 20.

Dan. vii.
11.

Rev. xiii. 4.

Rev. xiv. 9-
11; xx. 10.

any other wicked men, who may be, according to its declaration concerning God's almighty power, destroyed both body and spirit in hell.

Matt. x. 28.

Rev. xiv.

10; xix. 3.

Isa. lxvi.

24.

The mouth of the pit or lake of fire will be visible to the blessed in heaven; and also to the inhabitants of the earth, being in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, where the Gehenna fire used to be.

THE UNPROFITABLE SERVANTS.

LUKE, xvii. 7-10.

7. But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?

8. And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and

afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

9. Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

10. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

In the commencement of this chapter the Messiah spoke to the apostles of the hindrances and discouragements that would attend the service which He had enjoined upon them. To surmount these difficulties, and to enable them to obey His injunctions, they wisely prayed, "Lord increase our faith." "And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you."

Ver. 5, 6.

Mark, xi.

22, 23.

Speaking thus of the great things that faith in Him as the Messiah might have enabled them to perform, had their trust in His promises been greater, and doubtless in allusion to the marvellous things He intended them to accomplish, after being endued

with the Holy Ghost at Pentecost,—the Lord's purpose in delivering this parable was to teach humility—that without Him they could do nothing; and that though with Him they could do all things, yet, after all, they could only do what it was their duty to do, and that at best they were unprofitable servants to Him who needeth not the services either of men or angels to accomplish His will. John, xv. 5.

Grotius and Venema say, this parable does not at all represent the standing of the faithful under the new covenant, or "perfect law of liberty," but the merely servile standing of the Jew under the old. All difficulties disappear as soon as the parable is regarded as setting forth the relation of the Jewish people to God. They were hired to do a certain work, which if they did, they were like servants (slaves), free from stripes. They ate, they drank; they received their reward. James, i. 25.
Matt. xx. 14.

Nevertheless, the Lord, knowing the faith, the gifts, and the powers of serving Him, which He meant to bestow upon His disciples before going to a far country—knowing the temptations they would have to esteem their offices and their services very highly—here gives them a lesson in humility, which they would best understand after the Spirit should, according to promise, bring all things to their remembrance that the Lord spake unto them. Then, too, they would remember that if as servants they were unprofitable, even after having well done all that was commanded them, because they had only done what it was their duty to do, they would know by another parable what an amount of grace and favour will be shown to all who are found faithful, and "like unto men that wait for their Lord when he shall return for the marriage feast. . . . Blessed John, xiv. 12.
John, xiv. 26.
Isa. xxv. 6, 7.

Luke, xii.
35-37.

are those servants whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching. Verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them."

THE IMPORTUNATE WIDOW.

LUKE, XVIII. 1-8.

1. And he spake a parable unto them *to this end*, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;

2. Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:

3. And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.

4. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;

5. Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.

6. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.

7. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

8. I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

It is generally supposed that this parable teaches to all members of the Church the benefits of persevering and importunate prayer; but it is not observed that prayer here is for a special object at a special time.

The parable is highly prophetic, concerning the time when the Lord has promised "to avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful to his land and to his people."

Before we begin to comment upon the parable, we must explain that in "the time of the end" there will be two series of divine vengeance,—the first against the restored Jews, "the generation of

Deut.
xxxii. 43.

Dan. xii. 4.
9.
Deut.
xxxii. 35.

God's wrath," inflicted for national sins by the anti-Messiah as "the rod of his anger;" and the second when "this calamity is overpast" the Lord will come in person to save and avenge the repentant Jewish remnant—"For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come."

The city is Jerusalem, as it will be in the last days, full of judges and rich men, who will be oppressors of the poor, the widow, and the fatherless—against whom the Lord will be a swift witness.

The widow is the godly Jewish remnant, the third part of the partially restored Jews who are to be purified and refined in the fire of affliction in Jacob's trouble, out of which this believing remnant shall be delivered.

The cry for vengeance, unchristian as it would be from the Church, will be righteous, and a proof of living persevering faith and prayer in the last generation of Jews, whose calling as a nation is to inherit the land of Israel, and dwell therein for ever under the shadow of the Almighty.

It is the voice of this remnant, for whom deliverance is to be wrought in Zion and Jerusalem, that we hear crying for vengeance in the Psalms—"O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth, show thyself. Lift up thyself, thou Judge of the earth: render a reward to the proud." "They break in pieces thy people, O Lord, and afflict thine heritage. They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless." "Let burning coals fall upon them: let them be cast into the fire; into deep pits, that they rise not up again." "Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell." "As for me" (the remnant collectively), "I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me."

Luke, xxi.
22; Jer.
vii. 29.

Isa. x. 5, 6.
Ps. lvii. 1.
Isa. lxiii. 4.

Isa. i. 21-
23, 10.

James, v.
1-8.

Mal. iii. 5.

Zeph. iii.
12, 13.

Zech. xiii.
8, 9.

Mal. iii. 2,
3; Ezek.
xxii. 19-22.

Jer. xxx. 7.
Dan. xii. 1.

Ps. xxxvii.
11, 29.

Ps. xci. 1.

Joel, ii. 32.

Ps. xciv. 1,
2, 5, 6.

Ps. cxl. 10.

Ps. lv. 15.

Ps. xli. 5.

These imprecations, which are only a sample of very many others, are in accordance with the revealed will of Jehovah; for in this very manner He is utterly to destroy all His and His people's enemies, it being written, "For when the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed for ever."

Ps. xcii. 7. it being written, "For when the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed for ever."

Ps. ix. 5, 6. grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed for ever."

The widow's adversary is the persecuting anti-Messiah, who is to be destroyed with the brightness of the Redeemer's coming. Like the widow who betook herself to the local judge, and extorted his attention by her earnest importunity, so will the Jewish remnant perseveringly cry to God for preservation of their *lives* from their persecuting enemy, and implore vengeance upon him and all his ungodly confederates. Their very words are given us in this crisis—"Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men."

Dan. vii. 21, 22. of the Redeemer's coming. Like the widow who betook herself to the local judge, and extorted his attention by her earnest importunity, so will the Jewish remnant perseveringly cry to God for preservation of their *lives* from their persecuting enemy, and implore vengeance upon him and all his ungodly confederates. Their very words are given us in this crisis—"Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men."

Ps. xlii. 1. "Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation. O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man." "Make haste, O God, to deliver me; make haste to help me, O Lord. I am poor and needy; make haste unto me, O God: thou art my help and my deliverer; O Lord, make no tarrying."

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Ps. lxxi. 4. "Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man." "How long, Lord, wilt thou hide thyself for ever?" "Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation." "Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles."

Ps. lxxxi. 4. "Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man." "How long, Lord, wilt thou hide thyself for ever?" "Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation." "Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles."

Ps. lxxxix. 46. "How long, Lord, wilt thou hide thyself for ever?" "Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation." "Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles."

Ps. xxxviii. 22. "Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles."

Ps. xxv. 22. troubles."

Delay to answer these calls visibly and immediately will try the faith of the saints as in a furnace of fire; for their case is to be such that if help does not come soon, there will no flesh be left alive upon the earth.

Now, if an unjust judge be at last wearied into action by importunate prayer, how surely shall Israel's covenant keeping God answer His people's cry of distress, having heard them compassionately from the very first,—His delay to help them giving opportunity to glorify Him by continued faith under the most discouraging circumstances; and just when all hope will seem well nigh gone for ever, when the foe will appear to be on the very point of exterminating the name even of Israel, lo! heaven opens, and the God of Israel, riding in the heavens in Israel's help, comes forth in power and great glory, to save all Israel, destroy every foe, and realise every promise of blessing to the godly man (the remnant) upon the earth (land of Israel).

This parable was spoken, like many others, to the disciples as representatives of this believing remnant of the Jewish nation, its purpose being to teach them "to pray and not to faint." The word "men" is not to be found in the original of the first verse.

The disciples were Jews longing for their Messiah's glorious coming and kingdom, hoping it would soon appear. The Lord, therefore, warns them and the Pharisees, who were inquiring about it (for this parable is a part of a continuous discourse), of the great tribulation that must first be endured—suffering and danger so dreadful that anxious desires will be felt for only one even of the days of the Son of man, for one mighty interposition in their favour. His promise of such help must make them wary not to be deceived by the appearance then of false Christs, whose lying signs and wonders will deceive, if it were possible, the very elect. And to preserve them from being so, the Lord announced that, "as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even

Deut.
xxxii. 36.
Ps. lxxxiii.
3-5.
Rev. xix.
11.
Deut.
xxxiii. 26,
27.
Matt. xxiv.
30; Rom.
xi. 26.
Ps. i. 1-3;
xli. 2.

Luke, xvii.
20-30.
Mark, xiii.
19, 20.

2 Thess. ii.
9; Matt.
xxiv. 24.
Matt. xxiv.
27.

2 Thess. ii. 8. unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be: they must not therefore seek for Him in any chamber of the temple that will exist then, or in any secret or distant place."

Mark, xiii. 14; 2 Thess. ii. 4. In that temple and in Jerusalem, marvellous acts of idolatry and wickedness will make them like unto Sodom and Gomorrah, and cause the city to be

Rev. xi. 8. "spiritually called Sodom and Egypt," as it is denominated by the Spirit in the Old Testament Scriptures.

Rev. xviii. 8, 24. In an instant, suddenly, shall judgment overtake the wicked, and Jerusalem shall be visited of the Lord of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire; but though the Lord shall then roar out of Zion, and the heavens and the earth shall shake, He will be "the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel."

We hope these observations will convince the reader of the close connection that exists between the Old Testament Prophets and the Gospels, and also between both these and the book of the Revelation, which has hitherto been almost unperceived, from erroneously supposing the latter contains a mystical history of the Gentile period, so continuously overpassed.

It should be remarked that the concluding words of the 7th verse mean, "though He bear them long in hand," or delays long to help them—that is, as men count length of time—"nevertheless He will deliver them speedily;" and the deliverance will be great by Him "who is mighty to save," for "shall He find faith on the earth" does not mean that there will be few or none faithful, but that the faith of the faithful will be almost failing; so that when the Son of man

cometh, He will hardly find faith, or rather that faith which does not faint in prayer, which believes light will break forth when the darkness is the deepest—and and continues to pray.

THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN.

LUKE, XVIII. 9-14.

9. And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others :

10. Two men went up into the temple to pray ; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

11. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

12. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

13. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but amote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

14. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other : for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased ; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

The immediate object of the Messiah in speaking this parable “unto certain” (Pharisees) “which trusted in themselves that they were righteous,” was to rebuke the proud self-exalting and boasting spirit of the observers of the law “who despised others,” and to comfort self-abased publicans and sinners, such as the humbly repentant prodigal here before us.

The publican’s sins, like the woman’s in the parable of the two debtors, were many ; but He who appreciated her love, discerned his sorrow for sin, and declared him justified by repentance, to which the Jewish people were then called, rather than the Pharisee who felt no need of repentance ; for the humble shall be exalted and the proud abased.

We must by no means suppose that this boasting

Luke, xvii.
20.

Luke, vii.
47.

Matt. iii. 2
Mark, i. 4.

Luke, xiv.
11.

Pharisee belonged to that wicked class of Pharisees condemned in Matt. xxiii., "who say and do not," for this self-righteous man did keep the law, did do even more than it required ; and so far from "woes" being pronounced against him, we find he is justified, although the publican is so before him. We believe he is the type of all those legally righteous Jews whose unbelief in Jesus as the Messiah delayed the manifestation of the kingdom ; who, "going about to establish their own righteousness, would not submit themselves to the righteousness of God : " and that it was such boasting as his that Paul deprecated and condemned, when he afterwards wrote to the Church, Eph. ii. 8, "not of works, lest any man should boast."

Rom. x. 3,
4

Eph. ii. 8,
9

Like labourers in the vineyard, the Pharisee here shall verily have his reward : yet such doers of the law who rejected the Redeemer's free grace were to be taught that even publicans and harlots accepting it, and believing in Jesus as the Messiah, "should go into the kingdom before them." They had need to learn that the weightier matters of the law consisted not in the paying of tithe of mint and cummin, but in judgment, mercy, and faith (in the Christ). Luke, xi. 42. "These ought they to have done, and not to have left the others undone."

Matt. xxi.
31.

Luke, xi.
42.

Eph. iii. 5,
6 ; Col. i.
26, 27.

Though it was not until the kingdom was rejected that the Church and its doctrines of free grace came into view, yet in all dispensations it is the Redeemer's work alone that justifies and saves. The righteousness of the law was previously justifying only in virtue of that atonement, typified in all legal sacrifices ; but this was not at all understood by those who offered them, of which we have a convincing proof in the 34th verse of this chapter, where it is written even of the disciples, "and they understood

none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken"—viz., the Lord's death and resurrection.

All this discovers to us a most important way in which the publicans and harlots may have entered into the kingdom before the legally righteous Pharisees, if the former by grace and by faith have been received into the "hidden mystery," the Church of the elect, for there has been an election into it from the beginning; and the latter still awaiting their portion on the earth at the second coming of the Messiah.

Without in the least interfering with the general and personal lesson to be drawn from this parable, we may see in this poor publican, with his godly sorrow for sin, a type of the humble God-fearing Jewish remnant in "the time of the end," who will repent and not put their trust in their own works, but will offer unto Jehovah the "sacrifice of a broken spirit and contrite heart, which He will not despise."

Ps. cxliii. 2.

Isa. li. 17.

It is worthy of particular remark that the Greek word for "be merciful" in the publican's prayer, is the same as is used with reference to the sacrificial slain lamb in the temple, so that his prayer should run thus: "God be merciful to me the sinner: pardon me through the mercy seat."

Rom. iii. 25.

To pray standing was the manner of the Jews: and the first Jewish Christians stood in prayer on the Lord's day, to commemorate the Messiah's resurrection on that day.

THE TEN POUNDS.

LUKE, XIX. 11-27.

11. And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

12. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

13. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

14. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this *man* to reign over us.

15. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

16. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

17. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant : because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

18. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.

19. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.

20. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, *here is* thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin :

21. For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man : thou takest up that thou layest not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

22. And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, *thou* wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow :

23. Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury ?

24. And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds.

25. (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.)

26. For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given ; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

27. But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay *them* before me.

This parable has many points of resemblance to "the Talents" in Matt. xxv., but it differs as to the time and place of delivery, this being spoken by the Messiah to the multitude as well as his disciples, when he was drawing near to Jerusalem ; Matthew's, when he was seated with his disciples, three days after, on the Mount of Olives.

Among the Jews in attendance upon Him, crying

“Hosanna to the son of David,” were many who Matt. xxi. expected “that the kingdom of God would immedi-⁹ately appear,” and that the Redeemer’s first act of power would be the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. He would have such men to know their mis- Acts, i. 6. take, and that their faith must be tested by an absence on His part, during which they might not be able to maintain their allegiance to Him as king. He knew there were some who might soon join the cry of the citizens, “We will not have this man to reign over us,” “crucify him, crucify him;” and He would Mark, xv. 12-14. warn such unstable followers, that though He should depart for a season to receive a kingdom above, where “angels and authorities and powers” would worship Him, He should certainly return to judge unfaithful servants, reward faithful ones, and slay all the enemies who should then oppose the establishment of His kingdom on earth.

Our Lord’s parables must be explained in accordance with the customs of eastern countries in His day. He exemplifies what He was about to do by citing the case of a nobleman who delivered money to all his servants, requiring them so to use it during his absence that it might be returned to him with interest, each man trading with it according to his capacity or trade.

The nobleman promised reward in strict conformity with justice, according to the covenant that bound him and his people together; but, far above all they knew how to ask or think, will the Redeemer of Israel reward His disciples and His faithful servants, Matt. xix. 28, 29. when with His own return to earth shall come “the Acts, iii. 21. regeneration” and “the restitution of all things.”

In this parable the Lord speaks to His disciples as if they would be alive at His return, saying, “Occupy

till I come." He did so, regarding them as representatives of the nation which is uniformly spoken of as one generation, thus ignoring the time of the Jews' dispersion, and reducing the absence of the Messiah, as it were, to "a little while."

Matt. xxiv.
34; xxiii.
36; Hos.
iii. 4.
John, xvi.
16; Heb.
x. 37.

This parable does not say the Lord will be away for "a long time," which is a great peculiarity of the Talents.

Matt. xxv.
19.

It reverses the order of judgment and reward, for the enemies here are the armies of the beast and the false prophet, who the moment the Lord appears, shall be slain with the sword of Him who will come "conquering and to conquer," bringing salvation to his friends, but perdition to ungodly men.

Rev. xix.
11-21.

Rev. vi. 2.

Matt. xxv.
12.

Matt. xxv.
26, 30.

Matt. xxiv.
48, 51.

The idle unprofitable servant here is plainly accounted wicked; compare with the foolish virgins, the slothful and unprofitable servant, and the unfaithful servant.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

JOHN, x. 1-6.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

2. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

3. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

4. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

5. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

6. This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

Ver. 19, 20.

John, ix.
40, 41.

The Messiah spoke this parable to Jews and Pharisees, "but they understood not what things they were which He spake unto them."

As the parable is obviously a continuation of the preceding chapter, all false teachers of the Jews, like those rebuked in former parables, whether Pharisees, Scribes, or Priests, were primarily intended by "the thieves and robbers."

The Lord here exposes the ignorant, mercenary, and oppressive rulers and teachers, whom He so often reproved as blind leaders of the blind, that they became exasperated against Him, and at last conspired together to take away His life.

Matt. xv.

14

John, xi.

53.

John, vii.

1, 45.

Jesus therefore explains, that unlike them, He is the good Shepherd who giveth His life for the sheep of His own free will: He layeth it down that He may take it again, in order, that by so doing, all believers in Him might not only "have life" as in those days, but "have it more abundantly," as now after His resurrection.

Ver. 11, 17.

Ver. 10.

It is primarily "the kingdom of heaven" or "of God" that is the "sheepfold," of which the Messiah here declared Himself to be "the door:" then without confusing the metaphors—having spoken of Himself as the door of admission—He proceeded to speak of Himself as the great and good shepherd, a character and office appropriated by Jehovah throughout the Old Testament, as "the Shepherd of Israel."

Ver. 7.

Ps. lxxx. 1;

xxiii. 11;

lxxix. 13.

The Logos incarnated Himself that he might seek and save the lost (or wandering) sheep of the house of Israel.

Matt. xv.

24.

Matt. x. 5-

7.

All Jews were not sheep;—those mentioned in verses 26 and 27, Jesus said were not; but some were so, very particularly (His disciples); and they "followed" Him literally. But speaking generally, in this parable the sheep are the Jews as a nation, for whom it is expressly said in the next chapter that Jesus was to die; "and not for that nation only," but

John, xi.

50, 51.

- Ver. 16; for "other sheep," which means the scattered ten tribes of Israel, and all the Gentiles who believed through His word spoken, and now believe through the same word written; also the heathen, who will know Jesus as Jehovah at His second coming.
- John. xii. 32. Isa. lxvi. 19. Mal. i. 11; When the Shepherd was smitten, the sheep were scattered, and are now wandering among the nations. Zech. xiii. 7. Ezek. Their punishment for national sins will not be ended till after being partially regathered to their own land, and the flock so torn by future false shepherds, that only a remnant will remain to be delivered out of the great tribulation by the Lord. It is this remnant whom He "will reserve and pardon," and gather into Dan. xii. 1; one flock in the land of Israel for ever, with the lost Zech. ix. 14, 16. ten tribes.
- Jer. l. 20. Though Jews and Gentiles (according to the election of grace) are now joined together in one fold or church above, the prediction, "and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd," cannot be full accomplished till the blessed Chief Shepherd shall appear to complete His church by receiving His saints to Himself in the air, to be one with Him for ever in the new heavens: and then will Israel's Good Shepherd gather the remnants of Judah and Israel into the delight-some land, "the kingdom of heaven" upon the earth, which He has promised to Israel's seed for ever.
- Hear now what this Good Shepherd will do for His sheep in their one fold: "I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah, as the flock in the midst of their fold: they shall make great noise by reason of the multitude of men." "As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day when he is among his sheep scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all
- Ver. 16;
John. xii.
32.
Isa. lxvi.
19.
Mal. i. 11;
Rev. xi. 15.
Zech. xiii.
7.
Ezek.
xxxiv. 6;
Jer. l. 17-
20.
Zech. xi.
15-17.
Ezek.
xxxiv. 2-10.
Dan. xii. 1;
Zech. ix.
14, 16.
Jer. l. 20.

Heb. xii.
22, 23.
Ver. 16.
1 Pet. v. 4.
1 Thess. iv.
16, 17.
John. xvii.
20-24.

Mal. iii. 12.
Gen. xvii.
18.
Mic. ii. 12.

Ezek.
xxxiv. 12-
14.

places where they have been scattered, and I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them in a good pasture; and upon the mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there they shall lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel."

"And I will set up one shepherd over them: my servant David he shall feed them: and ye my flock are men, even the house of Israel."

"Behold I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all."

Nor is this all; for then Israel will be made a blessing to all the families of the earth, as predicted in Gen. xxii. 18. Israel's being graft in again will be to other nations "as life from the dead." Jehovah's "saving health will then be known among all nations" so as to convert all men. All will be converted by the Jews, and brought year by year to worship the king at Jerusalem.

Then, "in the dispensation of the fulness of times," there will be one fold and one shepherd, for all things shall be gathered together in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, into one glorious kingdom, even in Him "to whom every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess to the glory of God the Father."

Isa. lxxv. 9.

10.

Ezek.

xxxiv. 23.

30, 31.

Ezek.

xxxvi. 8-11.

Ezek.

xxxvii. 16-

25.

Amos, ix.

15.

Obad. xvii.

Zech. viii.

13.

Rom. xi.

15; Rev.

xi. 15; Ps.

lxvii. 1, 2.

Isa. lxvi.

19; Ps.

xcvi. 10;

cxlv. 11,

12; li. 13.

Zech. ii. 10,

11; xiv. 9,

16.

Ps. lxxxvi.

9; Zech.

viii. 20-23.

Eph. i. 10.

Phil. ii. 9-

11.

Isa. xlv. 23

25.

THE CORN OF WHEAT.

JOHN, XII. 24-33.

24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone : but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

25. He that loveth his life shall lose it ; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

26. If any man serve me, let him follow me ; and where I am, there shall also my servant be : if any man serve me, him will *my* Father honour.

27. Now is my soul troubled ; and what shall I say ? Father, save me from this hour : but for this cause came I unto this hour.

28. Father, glorify thy name.

Then came there a voice from heaven, *saying*, I have both glorified *it*, and will glorify *it* again.

29. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard *it*, said that it thundered : others said, An angel spake to him.

30. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.

31. Now is the judgment of this world : now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

32. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me.

33. This he said, signifying what death he should die.

This parable was spoken on the occasion when Ver. 19, 21. " certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast " of Pentecost, said to the apostles, " We would see Jesus." This caused the Pharisees to perceive that they prevailed nothing against Jesus, but that all men were beginning to believe in Him as the Messiah.

Jesus declared it was because the time was come when He should be glorified ; prophesying, " And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me : " he should be glorified, not only by ascending up into heaven, but also by becoming the Saviour of both Jews and Gentiles : yet this could not be without laying down His life for them all.

A corn of wheat yields no increase unless it be cast into the ground, and there perishes as to its former shape and substance : but while it appears to decay, a blade springs up, which at length produces many grains of the same kind.

In like manner the Logos might indeed alone have possessed His heavenly glory without having incarnated Himself; or after His incarnation He might have entered heaven alone by His own perfect righteousness, without suffering or death : but then no sinner of the whole human race could have been saved. His love therefore induced Him to submit to death on the cross, that after being laid in the ground, as if about to turn to corruption, He might thence arise as the "first fruits of a large increase of redeemed sinners."

As this was His design, and He was about to carry it into effect, He warned His disciples, and those Greeks also, not to love the mortal lives they then possessed, but comparatively hating or despising them, they should cleave to Him, that they might secure the eternal life which He would give to His faithful servants : His Father would certainly reward and honour in the most distinguished manner all those who should follow and own Him in His time of humiliation, danger, and suffering, however the Pharisees might despise Him and them.

Matt. xix.
27-29.

The Messiah spake this parable of His own death, and, in the 32d and 33d verses, predicted the manner of it. His death was that by which, at the appointed time (yet future), sin will be reproved ; Israel's national iniquity absolutely ended ; Satan, the prince of this world, will be cast out, and the world itself judged in "a little while."

Ver. 31 ;
Ezek. xxi.
25-27 ;
Dan. ix.
24.
John. xvi.
16-19.
John. xvi.
8-11.

That sin yet exists, and that the world is not judged, is obvious to the least observing ; and that Satan is not yet cast out, we have the testimony of the apostle Paul in Rom. xvi. 20, written by the spirit of God long after the Messiah's death.

Time which is long to human beings is short to God ; but the real cause of Paul's saying "shortly"

is, that Scripture passes over as a gap the time of the Jews' non-existence as a nation.

Rev. xx. 1-3, 10. Other scriptures are equally explicit concerning the Messiah's conquest of the devil at His second coming, when the promise that the seed of the woman shall crush His head will be fully accomplished.

Gen. iii. 15. At his glorious second advent the Redeemer "shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied;" the Church, the nation, and all the families of the earth,—the world itself,—will finally attest his power, and as Isa. liii. 11. His redeemed kingdom and "purchased possession," Eph. i. 10, 14. shall show forth His glory for ever and ever.

WALKING IN THE DAY CONTRASTED WITH THE NIGHT.

JOHN, XI. 9, 10.

9. Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. 10. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

Matt. xx. 6, 9. The same number of hours is mentioned here as in the parable of the Labourers.

The Messiah must go into Judea again, to finish the work given Him to do, though the Jews sought to stone Him.

Ver. 8. "The day," in its primary signification, means the time of the Lord's appearing in the flesh among the Jews, as compared with the preceding darkness.

"The night" means the subsequent night in which He threatens to come as a thief to those not watching for His return.

Matt. xxiv. 42, 43.

To the Jews Jesus said, "I am the light of the world"—"the true light"—"and as long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." "I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work." "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness."

John, i. 9.

John, ix. 5.

4

John, xii.

46.

"But the world knew him not:" and "this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men" (the Jews) "loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not."

John, i. 10.

John, iii.

19.

John, i. 5.

It is therefore Judah's darkness that the Logos came to enlighten—for "he came to his own, and his own received him not." He showed Himself to no other people; and said to His disciples, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

John, i. 11.

Matt. xv.

24.

Matt. x. 5.

6.

To His disciples He said, "Yet a little while is the light with you: walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you; for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth." "While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light." "Ye are the light of the world." "Be therefore like unto a city set on a hill, which cannot be hid:" and not like unto a candle hid under a bushel. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven. For ye are the salt of the earth" (or land): be not like to salt that has lost its savour, for then would you be only fit to be trodden under foot with the wicked, like Moab.

John, xii.

35 36.

Matt. v. 14.

Matt. v. 15.

16.

Isa. xxv.

10.

Isa. v. 20.

To Jewish unbelievers He said, "Woe unto them that put darkness for light, and light for darkness:"

Matt. vi. 23. "if the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

Jewish believers were called "the children of the light and of the day," for they knew the day of their merciful visitation; but the nation did not.

Luke, xii. 56; xix. 44.

The Lord, foreseeing His rejection by the Jewish people, foretold the long night in which they would

John, iv. 21. "neither worship in this mountain, nor at Jerusalem," and would be "without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice: but as the Holy Ghost did not reveal to the apostles the Jews' long

Hos. iii. 4. wandering time, Paul wrote of "the night" as far spent, and of "the day of the Lord's second coming as being near at hand;" and said, "Wherefore, put away from you the unfruitful works of darkness, and

Acts, i. 7. put upon you the armour of light," for "ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day" (of His coming)

Rom. xiii. 12, 13.

Phil. iv. 5. "should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night nor of darkness; therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be

1 Thess. v. 4-6.

sober:" not like the sleepers and the drunken in the parables of the ten Virgins, and Watching for the thief.

Matt. xxv. 5.

Matt. xxiv. 48, 49.

John, ix. 4. "The night," therefore, does not mean death, as many commentators teach, for that cometh continually and to all, but the time of the Messiah's absence:

Isa. lx. 2; Matt. xxiv. 29. specially the midnight or gross darkness (physical and moral) which will overspread the Jews' land in

Isa. ix. 1, 2. the time of the end, just before "the rising of the Sun of righteousness, with healing in his wings."

Mal. iv. 2.

Mark, xiii. 36. During this dark night, His people are warned to watch, "lest coming suddenly He should find them sleeping," and be to them as a thief in the night.

The nation is still walking in darkness: but after

the Jews' partial restoration in unbelief to their own land, a third part will seek and find the Lord their God, and will be saved out of the great tribulation.

Zech. xiii.
8, 9.

During that time of sore distress, the remnant will repent and make confession of grievous national sins, acknowledging the justice of their punishment: they will declare their confidence that while sitting in darkness the Lord will be a light unto them. In that day (of repentance) the Lord will cause "the deaf to hear the words of the Book, and the eyes of the blind" (nation) "to see out of obscurity, and out of darkness. They that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine." "Then shall their light break forth as the morning, and their darkness be as the noon day:" because "light is sown for the righteous," "and in the light of Jehovah shall they see light."

Ps. xviii. 3.
Isa. xxvi.
16-18.
Isa. lix. 9-12.
Mic. vii. 7-9
Isa. xxix.
18, 24.
Isa. vi. 9, 10.
Isa. lviii.
8-10.
Ps. xcvi.
11.
Ps. xxxvi.
9.
Isa. lx. 19, 20.

Messiah is coming again in power, to be the everlasting light and glory of His people Israel: also to be "a light to lighten the Gentiles," for saved nations shall walk in His blessed and glorious light, "and all flesh shall see His glory."

Luke, ii.
31.
Rev. xxi.
22-24.
Isa. xl. 5.
Ver. 11.

"These things" said Jesus, and they are numbered among the parables.

THE VINE AND BRANCHES.

JOHN, XV. 1-11.

1. I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

2. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, you. 3. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

K

4. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

5. I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

6. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned.

7. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask

what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

8. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

9. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

10. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

11. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and *that* your joy might be full.

We begin our observations on this parable by remarking, that as the Messiah's public teaching to the Jews terminated in the twelfth chapter of this Gospel, the promises in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters must be quite special to the apostles.

In the fourteenth, when the Messiah said to His Jewish disciples "Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in Jehovah, believe also in me" (as His Son and your Messiah), He was preparing for His speedy departure from them—therefore comforted them with very special promises.

John. xiv.
16, 17, 26;
xv. 7, 8,
16; xvi. 7,
13, 14-

1 Thess. iv.
16, 17.
1 Cor. xv.
23.

2 Thess. ii.
1; Col. iii.
4; Phil. iii.
20, 24.

Isa. v. 1-7.
Jer. ii. 21;
Hos. x. 1.

Ps. lxxx. 8-16.

Ezek. xv.

The promise of receiving the apostles to Himself at His second advent, that where He is there may also His servants be, was afterwards extended to every member of His body, in the abounding revelations of the Lord to the apostle of the Gentiles.

The Vineyard, of which Jehovah was the Husbandman, was the Jews' land, wherein He planted Israel as a noble vine; but because it became degenerate and barren, He had to purge it with fire, and thus punish often, as the sins of the nation deserved.

The Jews are the natural branches of this vine—all now broken off on account of national sins, which

are to be purged and purified in a furnace of affliction greater than they have ever yet known.

In this vineyard sprung up Jesus, the true vine that bears all the branches; but the apostles are the only branches spoken of in this particular place. One of them speedily realised the truth of the Redeemer's words by not abiding in Him. Judas, however, was never savingly given to Christ, for He said it was the Father's will "that of all which he had given me, I should lose nothing;" "those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled."

Although the words, "without me ye can do nothing," are in a general sense true of every man in every place and time—for in God we live and move and have our being—yet the subject here is the bringing forth much fruit by the disciples—viz., the wonderful miracles which should attest their union with Jesus, and the special commission they were on the point of receiving from Him.

In the peculiar time in which this parable was spoken, extraordinary and miraculous things had been daily wrought by Jesus to prove His Messiahship, and that He was sent by God to the Jewish nation. When rejected as their king, He delegated His miraculous power to the apostles, that they might be His witnesses for some time longer to this rebellious people: but, "nothing could they do"—no miracle, no discipline in the Church, no special act connected with their peculiar mission—without the Redeemer's presence in miraculous power by the Holy Ghost; for when James and John made a special request, very important to themselves as individuals, it was not granted.

The power with which the apostles were endued

Rom. xi.
21, 24.
Isa. iv. 3,
4; Ezek.
xxii. 19-22.
Mark, xiii.
19, 20.
Isa. xi. 1;
ix. 6, 7.
Matt. xxvi.
47.
Matt. xxvii.
5.
John, vi.
39.
John, xvii.
12.
Ps. cix. 8.

Matt.
xxviii. 20.
Mark, xvi.
17, 18.
Acts, i. 2,
4, 8.

John, xx.
22, 23.

Luke, xxiv.
49; Acts,
i. 4, 5.
Mark, x.
35-45.

extended to the administration of correction in the ecclesia, even to the cutting off such branches as

Acts, v. 1-11. Ananias and Sapphira altogether, and purging others by means of bodily sickness, blindness, and the like.

Acts, xiii. 11. Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Ghost, therefore were immediately punished, because sin against the Holy Ghost was not to be forgiven, either in this world or in that which is to come. It was to the apostles that Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father." Thus no limit was set to the apostles' power, except that what they asked should be in connection with their special work. They were also to ask believingly, otherwise the miracle would not appear; but with faith as a grain of mustard seed, if they said to this sycamine tree, "be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea," it would obey them. Hitherto the apostles had not asked as they should have done in Jesus' name; but the time was at hand when the Holy Spirit would teach them to glorify God by doing so freely. Chosen and ordained of God to this special privilege, they would testify by "signs and wonders following," to the death and resurrection of the Messiah, as His witnesses in Judea and in all the surrounding countries.

John, xiv. 12.

John, xvi. 24.

Ver. 16.

Mark, xvi. 20.

The union of these men with the Messiah was so intimate and tender, He compares it to His own with the Father: they are no longer servants but friends.

The apostles must have had a joy in the Holy Ghost—in permanence and degree—beyond the gleams of spiritual joy that the best of Christians now have in this evil world. The Holy Ghost must therefore have been a Comforter to the apostles such

as He was to nobody else, for none had His personal presence and teaching as they had—and none being deprived of His companionship as they were, had the same need of comfort. John, xiv. 16.

“There is a distinction to be made between that special presence promised to the apostles for their peculiar work, thus making them infallible in all they wrote and did as apostles, and that gracious presence of the Spirit which saints in all ages enjoy.”

Concerning the special promise to the apostles—
 “if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three” (of you) “are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them”—the following literal fulfilments are recorded: “And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them.”
 “And after eight days again, his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst of them”—in His visible resurrection body.

Matt. xviii. 19, 20.

Luke, xxiv. 36.

John, xx. 19.

It is surely inexcusable to overlook all the special applications to the apostles which the gospels contain, and to teach Christians as if the Holy Ghost had dictated all things of the Gentile visible Church now.

Doubtless believing Gentiles have great interest therein, for they belong to the wild olive branch, which was grafted into the Jewish Christian Mother-Church. But though the natural branches of the fat olive tree have been broken off, there is little room for the Gentiles' high-minded neglect of the Jews, who are certainly to be grafted in again, and the Gentiles then cut off: “thou barest not the root, but the root thee.”

Rom. xi. 17, 24.

Dan. ii. 44, 45.
Rom. xi. 18.

It is but fair to add that the Gentile nations (not churches) that are then to be cut off are those of which we have the "burdens" of "woe" in Isaiah and the other prophets. The nations symbolised by gold, silver, brass, and iron in the second chapter of Daniel are to be resuscitated in the seventieth week of years, as predicted in seventh chapter of Daniel, and are all to be dashed to pieces at the coming of Messiah, "the stone of Israel," the universal King.

Dan. ix.
24.

Gen. xlix.
24.

John, xiv.
6.

Heb. x. 20.

Jesus at His first advent became "the way, the truth, and the life," or as Paul expresses it, "the new and living way," by which any man could then come to the Father, in contradistinction to the law and the deeds of the law, by which the Jews were till then brought near to Jehovah. The new and living way of those days is now an old and well tried way.

The Jew who saw Jesus in the flesh had seen the Father—"for I and my Father are one." Jews were to believe this by the mighty works that Jesus wrought before them.

John, x. 30.
John. xiv.
11.

2 Cor. vi.
18.

In denying that Christians now are "the branches" in this parable, no injury is done to them, for we contend they are "sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty," as all believers came to be after the Apostolic Church was manifested: and so they are branches in Christ in the highest possible sense.

By saying that the apostles are certainly "the branches," and that the "much fruit" means their greater miraculous works than were wrought by the Messiah, we do not deny that we should bring forth "much fruit" by the Spirit; but it must be done in a very different way: for the apostles had direct divine inspiration and guidance, by which they were made "to know all things," and write concerning what is future—all that is written in the New Testament.

By the same direct inspiration, when brought before rulers for Jesus' sake, the apostles needed not to think beforehand what they should say, for the Holy Ghost would teach them miraculously what they should say. And when Jesus should be taken away from them, the Holy Ghost would bring to their remembrance all the things that He had said unto them.

Mark, xiii.
11.

John, xiv.
26.

They had also most special promises with regard to the government of the Apostolic Church. They, and they alone, had the power to bind and to loose, to retain or to remit sins; upon them only did Jesus breathe the Holy Ghost. If such promises apply to Christians generally, any Christian community, meeting as a church, may say, "Whatsoever" (we) "bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever" (we) "loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

John, xx.
21-23.

Matt. xviii.
18.

Many persons now, calling themselves priests, impiously and ignorantly pretend to forgive sins; but few have had faith enough to try to work miracles, like the apostles. Those who at one time did so, knew nothing of the parenthetical nature of the time in which they lived, and vainly endeavoured to glorify God by showing to other churches, that it was only want of faith on their part that prevented miracles from being as general as in the days of the apostles. The special call to the apostles by the Lord in person, and the extraordinary way He ordained them, have nothing to do, in the overpassed period of His absence, with the calling and ordination of ministers of any kind now, or with the election of any individual into Christ's invisible body, the church above.

Heb. xii.
22, 23.

The words, "without me ye can do nothing," cannot be generally applied to Christians now, without

relieving them of a responsibility which all feel and do not deny; for we have each one a free will, and are all more or less self-condemned for not doing many things we might have done, and for having done what we are conscious we could have refrained from doing.

The apostles were made prophets by the performance of the promise of inspiration by the Holy Ghost—"and he shall teach you things to come." But how very differently are we taught things to come! for is it not by reading in God's holy book the apostles' written words?

John, xiv. 16, 17; xv. 26, 27. The Holy Spirit was given to the apostles, "to abide with" (them) "for ever;" and in performance of this promise John had the spirit of prophecy to the end of his days, according to another promise spoken by Christ Himself—"Lo, I am with you until the end of life," or conclusion of the age.

Matt. xxviii. 20. The joy promised in John, xvi. 20 has not come yet; for "the little while" of which the Lord spake is not the short time he was in the grave, but "the time of the end," or seventieth week of years; for, overpassing the Jews' wandering time or non-national existence, Jesus, like all other Jewish prophets, took no account of, except on one occasion.

Matt. xxv. 19. The Holy Ghost was given to the Jewish nation primarily in the days of the apostles, but not permanently, for the world is not yet reformed "of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment," but it will be so in "the time of the end;" therefore here, with regard to the work and outpourings of the Holy Ghost, we find the same space or gap as in Joel, ii. 28.

Isa. xxxii. 15; Zech. xii. 10.

Making general applications of such specialities as these chapters contain for the Jewish apostles and

the Jewish nation, leads to false doctrine and dangerous neglect of Christian privilege. For instance, some sincere believers teach distinctly that they need not pray for the Holy Spirit, because He is given already—to “abide with them for ever” (individually and collectively). They say, to do so would be to ignore His having been given, and testify unbelief as to the possession of this precious gift, bestowed once for all upon the Church at Pentecost. These erring brethren have yet to learn that the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost in Jerusalem was in fulfilment of promises to the Jews as a nation. Let Isa. xxviii. 11, 12, Matt. iii. 11, and Joel, ii. 28, be compared with 1 Cor. xiv. 21, 22, and it will appear that the Pentecostal outpouring was upon a company of Jewish believers in Jesus as the Messiah, and in “the kingdom of heaven” as being near “at hand,” before that Jewish vine of which Jesus was the root, and the apostles were the branches, became visible as the Church, whereof Christ is the chief corner-stone, Eph. ii. 20. and the foundations are the apostles and prophets.

To use all Scripture indiscriminately, and apply it all to Christians now, is not “rightly to divide the word of truth;” but divided it must be, if we are ever to get its meaning as a whole.

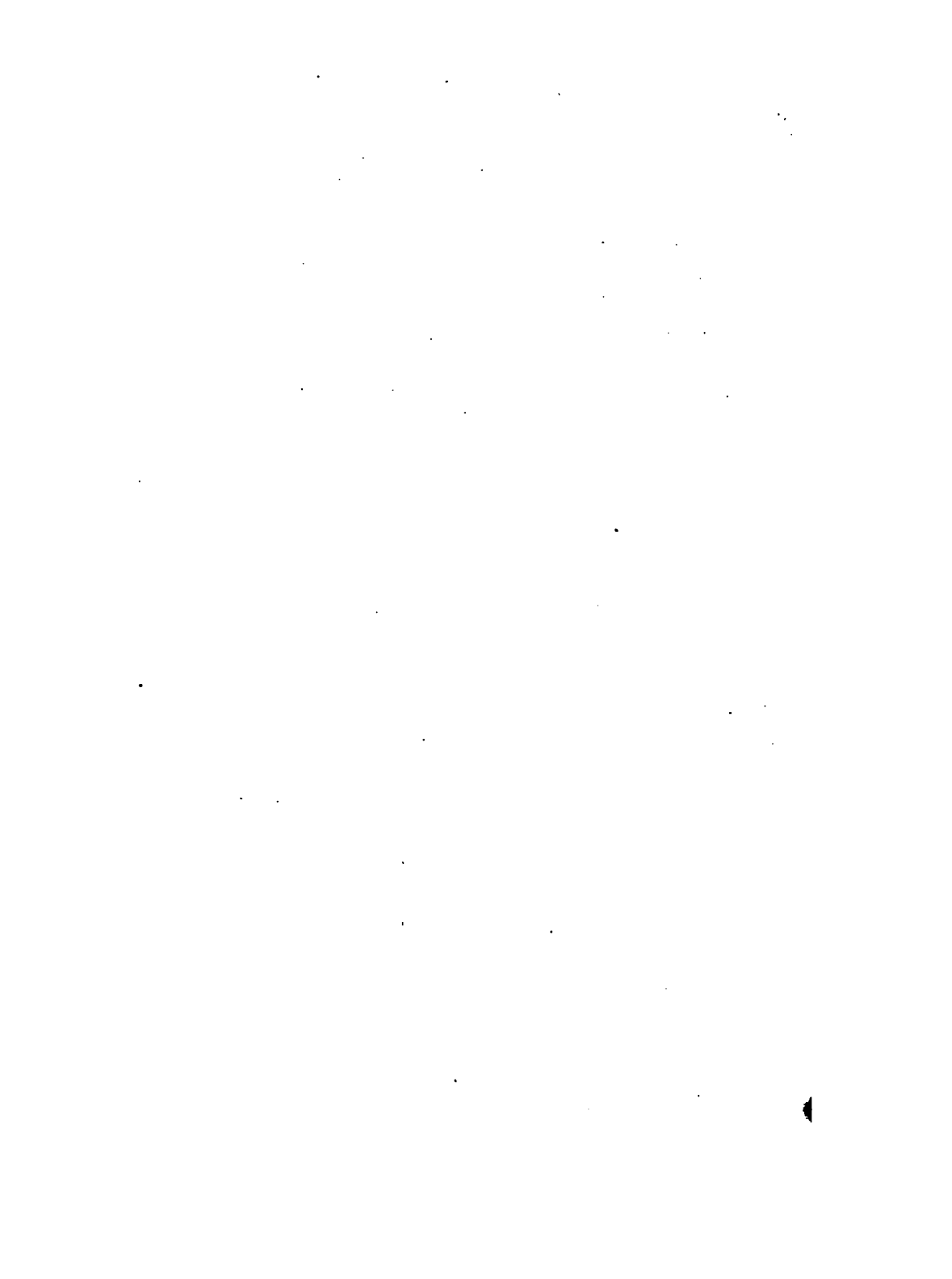
Christians now must come to Jesus, and follow Him by faith—the only way possible; but the Jews and the apostles did so by sight and in person, for in this manner they were invited to come unto Him; Matt. xi. 28. and from the apostles in particular “flowed forth the springs of living water” (the New Testament Scriptures), “springing up into everlasting life” in all them John, vii. 37. that were made wise unto salvation by their personal John, iv. 14. preaching, and also by “their word” written. John, xvii. 20.

From the written Word we learn *facts* concerning

a Person, belief of which is saving ; but our theological systems and doctrines are only inferences from Scripture, and our creeds human compositions : and as all men infer differently, and without the direct aid of the Holy Ghost to guide and inspire them as He did the apostles, our innumerable mistakes and disagreements are quite accounted for.

It is hoped that when all the verities in these Notes come to be admitted, by studying Scripture according to its plain grammatical meaning, the deductions and inferences from it by all sects of Christians, will be much more correct than they have been ; and so much more alike, that harmony and unity of faith may be greatly increased. The prayer of the writer is, that doubts and difficulties may be removed from many minds, by the new keys to their solution given in this and former volumes ; and that the Bible, which it is our privilege to examine for ourselves, may become more influential and more loved when it is better understood.

THE END.



the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are aged 65 and over has increased by 1.5 million, and the number of people aged 75 and over has increased by 1 million (Office of National Statistics 1999). The number of people aged 85 and over is projected to increase by 1.5 million by the year 2020 (Office of National Statistics 1999).

There is a growing awareness of the need to develop services to meet the needs of the ageing population. The Department of Health (1999) has set out a strategy for the future of health care for older people. The strategy is based on the principle that older people should be able to live in their own homes for as long as possible, and that health care should be provided in a way that is appropriate to their needs. The strategy is based on the principle that older people should be able to live in their own homes for as long as possible, and that health care should be provided in a way that is appropriate to their needs. The strategy is based on the principle that older people should be able to live in their own homes for as long as possible, and that health care should be provided in a way that is appropriate to their needs. The strategy is based on the principle that older people should be able to live in their own homes for as long as possible, and that health care should be provided in a way that is appropriate to their needs.

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